823
P83P
1849
v.1

THE

STANDARD NOVELS AND ROMANCES.

Price Three Shillings and Sixpence each.

1. The Pilot—*C*
2. Caleb Willia
3. The Spy—*Co*
4. Thaddeus of
   Porter.
5. St. Leon—*Go*
6. Last of the M
7. The Scottish
   J. Porter.
8. The Scottish
   J. Porter.
9. Frankenstein
   Ghost-Seer.
10. Edgar Huntl
    and Conclu
11. Hungarian B
    Porter.

Art

sion

sten.

ne—

5s.

Mrs.

n.

of
and
is.

ore

Russell.

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
823
P83p
1849
v.1

47. Paul Clifford—*Bulwer.* Price 3s.
48. The Younger Son—*Capt. Trelawney.*
49. The Alhambra — *Washington Irving;* The last of the Abencerrages—*Châteaubriand;* and the Involuntary Prophet—*Horace Smith.*

n.

50. The Headsman—*Cooper.*
51. Anastasius. Vol. I.—*Hope.*
52. Anastasius. Vol. II.—*Hope.*
53. Darnley—*James.*
54. Zohrab—*Morier.*
55. Heidenmauer—*Cooper.*
56. De L'Orme—*James.*
57. Headlong Hall—Nightmare Abbey—Maid Marian, and Crochet Castle—*Peacock.*
58. Trevelyan—*The Author of "A Marriage in High Life."*
59. Philip Augustus—*James.*
60. Rookwood—*Ainsworth.*
61. Henry Masterton—*James.*
62. Peter Simple—*Marryat.*
63. Jacob Faithful—*Marryat.*
64. Japhet in Search of a Father—*Marryat.*
65. King's Own—*Marryat.*
66. Mr. Midshipman Easy—*Marryat.*
67. Newton Forster—*Marryat.*
68. The Pacha of Many Tales—*Marryat.*
69. Rattlin the Reefer.
70. Captain Blake; or, My Life—*Maxwell.*
71. Helen—*Miss Edgeworth.*
72. The Last Days of Pompeii—*Bulwer.* Price 5*s.*
73. The Bivouac—*Maxwell.*
74. Precaution—*Cooper.*
75. Jack Brag—*Theodore Hook.*
76. Rory O'More—*Lover.*
77. Ben Brace—*Capt. Chamier.*
78. The Vicar of Wrexhill—*Mrs. Trollope.*
79. The Buccaneer—*Mrs. S. C. Hall.*
80. Tylney Hall—*Thomas Hood.*
81. The Widow Barnaby—*Mrs. Trollope.*
82. The Soldier of Lyons—*Mrs. Gore.*
83. Marriage—*The Author of "The Inheritance" and "Destiny."*
84. Inheritance.
85. Destiny.
86. Gilbert Gurney—*Theodore Hook.*
87. The Widow and the Marquis—*Theodore Hook.*
88. All in the Wrong; or, Births, Deaths, and Marriages—*Theodore Hook.*
89. Homeward Bound—*Cooper.*
90. The Pathfinder—*Cooper.*
91. The Deerslayer—*Cooper.*
92. Jacqueline of Holland—*Grattan.*
93. The Man-at-Arms—*James.*
94. Two Old Men's Tales.
95. The Two Admirals—*Cooper.*
96. Richard Savage—*Whitehead.*
97. Cecil—*Mrs. Gore.*
98. The Prairie Bird—*The Hon. C. A. Murray.*
99. Jack o' Lantern—*Cooper.*
100. Ayesha—*Morier.*
101. Marchioness of Brinvilliers—*Albert Smith.*
102. Belford Regis—*Miss Mitford.*
103. My Cousin Nicholas—*Ingoldsby.*
104. The Poacher—*Marryat.*
105. The Outlaw—*Mrs. S. C. Hall.*
106. The Phantom Ship—*Marryat.*
107. The Dog-Fiend—*Marryat.*
108. Adventures of Mr. Ledbury—*Albert Smith.*
109. Agnes de Mansfeldt—*Grattan.*
110. The Improvisatore—*Andersen.*
111. Romance and Reality—*Miss L. E. Landon.*
112. Catherine de Medicis—*Miss L. S. Costello.*
113. Percival Keene—*Marryat.*
114. Recollections of a Chaperon—*Lady Dacre.*
115. Experiences of a Gaol Chaplain.
116. Legends of the Rhine—*Grattan.*
117. Tales of the Peerage and Peasantry—*Lady Dacre.*
118. Sir Ralph Esher—*Leigh Hunt.*
119. The Hamiltons—*Mrs. Gore.*
120. Life of a Sailor—*Capt. Chamier.*
121. Hector O'Halloran—*Maxwell.*

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

Bradbury & Evans, Printers, Whitefriars.

Price One Shilling.

BENTLEY'S RAILROAD LIBRARY.

TURF CHARACTERS;

THEIR OFFICIALS, &c.

WITH ANECDOTES OF LORD GEORGE BENTINCK, AND ALL THE PATRONS OF THE TURF.

THE COMIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR;

WITH NUMEROUS HUMOROUS ENGRAVINGS, BY LEECH.

NOTES ON NOSES.

MARTIN TOUTROND;

ADVENTURES OF A FRENCHMAN IN LONDON.

BY JAMES MORIER,

Author of "Hajji Baba."

NIGHTS AT SEA;

OR, ADVENTURES DURING THE LATE WAR.

BY THE OLD SAILOR.

TO BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER POPULAR WORKS.

LITERARY GAZETTE.

"Full of genuine humour and entertainment."

THE EXAMINER.

"This Series of Works has a merit of its own. Much amusement without a grain of offence, and illustrations which carry the eye pleasantly over the page. We have laughed exceedingly at the Illustrations of the 'Comic Grammar,'—a capital piece of humorous literature, thoughtful as well as mirthful."

THE ATHENÆUM.

"This Series is intended to cater for the reader who would make a Railway Journey his relaxation. The volumes are neatly printed, and of a size convenient for the pocket."

WEEKLY DISPATCH.

"The 'Comic Grammar' is profusely, appropriately, and humorously illustrated; and the literary part blends wit, fun, and instruction most admirably together. Thus constituting a work unrivalled of its kind.

"'Notes on Noses' is really a superior work, and contains the germs of thought and impressions as valuable, as pregnant with ennobling elements, and discussed with a certain grave humour, as they are profound in themselves.

"'Turf Characters' is a very clever and entertaining work."

CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR WORKS.

I.

THE ATTACHÉ; OR, SAM SLICK IN ENGLAND.

II.

PADDIANA; OR, SCRAPS AND SKETCHES OF IRISH LIFE. 3*s.* 6*d.*

III.

SAM SLICK THE CLOCKMAKER. 5*s.* (530 pages.)

IV.

OLLA PODRIDA. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, Author of "Peter Simple." 3*s.* 6*d.*

V.

SMITH'S TRADITIONS OF THE STREETS OF LONDON. 3*s.* 6*d.* (440 pages.)

VI.

MAXWELL'S WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST. 3*s.* 6*d.*

VII.

MONS. VIOLET. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, Author of "Peter Simple," &c. 3*s.* 6*d.*

VIII.

BOZ'S MEMOIRS OF GRIMALDI, THE CLOWN. 3*s.* 6*d.* With numerous Engravings by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, and Portrait.

IX.

NORMAN'S BRIDGE. By the Author of "Emilia Wyndham." 3*s.* 6*d.*

X.

MRS. TROLLOPE'S DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS. 3*s.* 6*d.* With Portrait.

XI.

CHAMBERS'S HISTORY OF SCOTLAND. 3*s.* 6*d.*

XII.

SLACK'S MINISTRY OF THE BEAUTIFUL. 3*s.* 6*d.*

XIII.

NEALE'S LIFE-BOOK OF A LABOURER. 3*s.* 6*d.*

XIV.

AGNES DE MANSFELT. By T. C. GRATTAN, Author of "Highways and Byways." 1*s.* 6*d.*

*** *To be had of all Booksellers and at all the Railway Stations.*

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

THE PASTOR'S FIRESIDE.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

Pickering. Greatbach.

THE PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE.

"Who art thou, that darest so to approach Alon Humoya?"

London, Published by E. Williams, and R. Bentley, &c.

THE

PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE,

A NOVEL.

I will confess, the ambitious projects which I once had, are dead within me. After having seen the parts which fools play upon the great stage; a few books, and a few friends, are what I shall seek to finish my days with. TWEDDELL.

BY

MISS JANE PORTER.

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION, BY THE AUTHOR

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET;

AND BELL & BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH.

1849.

823
P83p
1849
v. 1

INTRODUCTION.

As in the case of my two former works, published in the Standard Novels, I have been required to give a sort of natural history of "The Pastor's Fire-side."—They ask me what excited my first idea of writing so extraordinary a narrative; and why, in a biographical romance founded on the story of two such men as Ripperda and Wharton, whose most celebrated actions all belong to the south of England and the Continent, I had selected the northern part of our country for the commencement of my tale? And above all, why choose the bleak and remote island of Lindisfarne, a spot like a speck in the wide sea, for the early education of my young hero, Louis de Montemar, the son of Ripperda, intended for all the graceful associations of foreign courts, in balmy climates, rather than have planted his infancy on the sunny shores of the southern parts of our happy land, where elegance, and a genial atmosphere, would have nurtured mind and body together? "And," say they, "if a *Pastor's fire-side* was to be his rearing-place, was there not the beautiful Isle of Wight, with its venerable and ever-admired Binstead parsonage?" It stood there, in the era of my tale; and over its lowly door still holds its

Gen. res. 4 Apr. 49 Thorb. 1849, 2 v. 18 May 49 Richards

old revered motto, "Contentment is wealth!"—"And," add they, "if his mind were to be opened to scenes of patriotic and fine ambitions, he would see the bright sea every day floated with the victorious navy of England, passing in gallant review before him, between Spithead and the Downs, or sailing away to give laws and protection to half the world!"

I grant it all. But I chose my northern site, because with it my own youth was most familiar. I loved its misty waves, its tempest-beaten cliffs;—its heathy hills, and rocky coasts; because amongst its wild shores "the home of my forefathers stood." And thither my honoured parent brought us, from our earliest days passed in Scotland, from her little "*widow's beild*"* in that kindred country. But it was only a few miles farther south; for all the places I now speak of, may be called on the Border Lands; the former fields of chase or foray contentions, between the Scottish and English chiefs on either side the Tweed. Here, for awhile, she set up her own unpretending homestead amongst "the last of her race;" and fain were her children's feet to run over hill and dale, and clamber cloistered or castled ruins, which they had heard tell of again and again from their dear mother's lips, linked with many a treasured history of their former purposes. Bamborough Castle, and Holy Lindisfarne, came into these sacredly remembered traditions. And the lights gleaming afar over the troubled deep, shining from the high-cliffed battlements of the former, were gazed at from below, by our eager eyes, with a holy awe, when we were told of the Christian

* The Scottish term for a small family house.

bequests from different good and great men who had left large endowments to furnish those lights nightly; to warn mariners from those fearful rocks, and, by signals, to guide them, in cases of threatened shipwreck, to where, by the firing of guns of distress, they would be instantly sought for on the wild waves, by life-boats despatched from the Castle. My beloved mother had passed many of her youthful days in these, on a visit to the Archdeacon of Northumberland, the then possessor of it; and with admiring, or anxious gaze, she often looked from Queen Bebba's tower, on ships bearing on in quiet and magnificent course over a smoothly distant track, or on a darkened sea, moving strugglingly along. In the dead of night she has been awakened by the report of the mariner's gun of distress, mingling with the horrid roar of the blowing tempest; and rising from her bed, to look for a moment on the scene without, while the gust tore the casement window from her hand, she has beheld a flashing darkness, amid thunder and lightning, and a raging sea and heavens, as if no hope could be entertained for those who were plunging their boats from the Castle Cove, to answer the call of human misery. Thousands have been saved by those bold and Christian sons of the deep. These did, indeed, literally fulfil their Divine Lord's will, and became "fishers of men!" rescuing many a poor impenitent soul from an impending watery grave. And where these exertions failed, when the bodies of the drowned were cast on shore, which usually happened after the subsiding of the storm, a decent interment piously consigned them to a sacred resting-place in the cemetery of the Castle. There were apartments provided for the res-

cued sufferers, with every assistance and comfort their situations could need.

Thus, from the first beacon-light, which one grateful heart preserved from the weltering waves, lit on that sheltering cliff, subsequent bequeathments of other generous friends to humanity, or rather of a Christian impulse "to do as they would be done by," gradually spread those hospitable towers with various luminous signals; to warn, to cheer, and to guide all who hereafter on that often dark and trackless deep, so dangerous from its many unseen rocks, might need a refuge from the storm. Many a sea-bewildered little coasting vessel has perished by night on the hidden Crasster Rocks; a perilous bed of death, not far distant from the Bamborough Cliffs.*

But Bamborough had another claim to being made a principal site of a story in which Duke Wharton was to play a principal part. It was in its halls, to the entailed loss of many of the collateral branches of the families who owned its adjacent manors, that the future risings in the northern counties in favour of the expatriated royal Stuarts, were hatched into life by the secret broodings of that wily partisan. Many a hand now holds a plough there, whose fathers then commanded the harvest.

The northern coast, too, was that most intimately connected with the trading interests of the Duke de

* I remember the body of one little cabin boy, that was cast up there: a poor woman of the neighbourhood stopped and looked at it; — she touched the cold forehead, and, wringing her hands, piteously cried — "Oh, woe is me! where be thy poor mither? She will never see that face again!"

Ripperda, the father of my young hero, who was a merchant of Holland, as well as a grandee of Spain.

So far my biographical authority from my chief characters, for linking their names to the spots where, in this work, they are first mentioned. But my taste and principle would have led to the adoption of such scenes, in my views of privacy and hardy culture, for the son of Ripperda; whose life was to be one of stemming the world's torrents. "The wonderful, the wild," in the rough mountains, under the north's stern winters, and brief though bright summers, seemed to me more consonant to such a destiny, than rearing him amidst the bland airs, and multitudinous neighbourhoods, gay and indulgent of themselves, in these our southern counties. To me, the rugged and artless-mannered north, has ever been associated with ideas of poetry, of noble, of tender sympathies.

It was there, indeed, as my former writings have gratefully testified, that our young hearts first imbibed the well-springs of all that we have since felt of those best impulses of human nature. And after we had passed over Cheviot, whose often wistfully scanned brow had so long parted our infant years from the land of our mother's parental home, the passion for the legend, and the land connected with it, which our Scottish nurse-tales of Falkirk and Culloden had first awakened, was then roused to fresh excitement, by a beloved aunt's narratives of "all the country round." Of consecrated Lindisfarne, and its monastery, enclosing the tombs of ancient kings as well as of martyred saints. Of Warkworth Castle, where Harry Hotspur took leave of his sweet wife! and we looked up from the keep-mount, with sorrow in our little hearts, to the vacant

window, where the wild stone-crop was blowing into the roofless apartment, where he had stood, and parted from her, for a field whence he never was to return. Then our aunt's true minstrel memory told of still superb Alnwick, whose turrets had every one a story of its own, from the times of the Picts, to those of many a generation of the "brave and the beautiful" of the gallant house of Percy.

But all these visions of knights and of ladies, long gone by into their sculptured tombs, never usurped over the innocent enjoyment we had in the most simple objects of nature. I well remember one fine day in summer, when my young brother had seated himself on a stone to make a sketch of Malcolm's Cross, (which stands at no great distance from the principal gate of Alnwick Castle,) my little sister and myself were told by the affectionate companion of our walk, that as we had often longed to see a shepherd, if we would go on over the hill, we should have our curiosity gratified. Away we ran, our imaginations all alive. But when we arrived over the bend of the hill, and looked about, we saw only a poor old man seated on the green bank, in a grey frock, with a blue bonnet on his head, and knitting stockings. His dog lay asleep beside him; and his sheep were browsing not far off. Our dear, little, animated Maria, turned her disappointed eyes upon her aunt, exclaiming,— "And is this a shepherd?—O! how different!"

Different, indeed, from what we had expected! Our heads being filled with the half celestial images of them "who fed their flocks by night, in the plains of Bethlehem;" when the heavens opened, and they

heard the song of angels —" Peace on earth, and good will to men!"

But my sister gathered a handful of butter-cups for one of the lambs; and the matter was soon made as agreeable between her and the old shepherd and his dog, as if he had been as young and angel-like as the brightest form in her childish fancy.

In subsequent years I trod the same ground again, passing several months on the shores of the Alne and the Coquet; dividing my time between Morewick Hall, on the latter river, and Lesbury vicarage, on the former. The hall is still possessed by the family of my then respected host, a descendant of the great Earl of Peterborough, and who was a man well worthy of his illustrious ancestor. His eldest son, the present possessor, Colonel Grey, fought gallantly in Spain, and now resides in his home, a wounded hero, but a happy husband. His younger brother was the gallant Captain Charles Grey, so affectionately commemorated by Mr. Gleig, in his fine, manly, and military account of the affair of New Orleans, &c. But the vicarage of Lesbury has passed away to another incumbent; my venerable friend, the Reverend Percival Stockdale, a poet and historian, (and who had been the intimate associate of Dr. Johnson, Lord Lyttleton, and the whole of that chosen circle,) being in this world no more.

From him, I learned several traditional accounts of Duke Wharton; and, that superstition had conjectured that the human apparition of the extraordinary huntsman of noble mien, and appalling mysterious conduct, which it was said had joined the profligate son of the good Lord Lyttleton in the chase, and disap-

peared from his hospitality in so unaccountable a manner, was no other than the tormented ghost of this dissolute nobleman; sent on an errand of warning mercy, to a set of men, of deeds too much like his past life.

But it was not either at Morewick, or at Lesbury, that the story of "The Pastor's Fire-side" was begun. It was at my beloved mother's fire-side, in the ever dear village of Thames Ditton, in our pretty cottage there, by the river side — to which the late Sir Frederick Eden, of classic memory, used to give the name of "Little Arcadia." It stood in a garden of roses, and its humble shingled roof was almost covered with the same. In that lowly, but lovely place, we were accustomed to see a society which palaces cannot always command; spirits, bright in talents, and in virtues! some, still surviving, to glad our hearts on occasional re-unions; but most gone to the better place, "prepared for the justified in Christ."

With such visitants, to study, and to copy, for the best features of my best characters, I planned, and I wrote, under that revered little roof, (now levelled to the ground, and stables built where it stood,) my biographical romance, on the lives of those two extraordinary persons, the Duke de Ripperda and Duke Wharton.

My aim in the story, was to show the temptations, the dangers, and, generally, even the temporal ruin of immoderate ambition: to enforce on the mind of a young reader (I mean a reader at the age when such a passion usually first takes its flight into action), by the experience of Louis de Montemar, my young hero, that "the best use of talents, and the really noblest

ambition, is to lead a life of Christian devotedness to the service of his fellow-creatures." This ambition made Gustavus Adolphus a warrior and benefactor: the selfish ambition made Charles the Twelfth a conqueror and a destroyer.

To this object, in its various relations with regard to the characters of both men and women, I may sincerely declare, that both my sister and myself, ever since we first ventured to write for the public, have always directed the whole power of our minds. At first, we wrote novels and romances, because it gave us pleasure; and then we continued to write them, and to publish them, because our own young hearts told us, that youth will always seek such amusement; therefore we held it no waste of time to take possession of some part of such vantage ground, and fill it, to the extent of our humble abilities, with the best lessons our inculcated principles, and growing observations, might produce.

But before I take leave of the reader of the present edition of "The Pastor's Fire-side," I would make one remark, which, indeed, was the chief motive with me, in writing this new preliminary address; and which I therefore beg may be recollected while perusing the progress of Duke Wharton's character in the work.

When I began the portrait of that dangerously brilliant man, it was my intention to have painted it altogether as the *ignis fatuus* he certainly was; mischievous to all who followed him; destructive in the end to him who holds the wild career; — but the persuasive tenderness of a loved critic, to whom I read part of the manuscript, pleaded so resistlessly to me, "to have compassion on the gay and gallant creature (as she

called him) I had made; and not work up his actions to the infamy I intended should bring on him a terrible catastrophe!" that, I confess, (in this instance, perhaps, the only one in which I had a better judgment than hers,) I did give up that better judgment to the generous pleadings of her, whose heart, ever in tender imitation of her Creator, "would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness, and live!" But, in this solitary instance, a pleased taste, and excited sensibility, led my sweet monitress astray.

I proceeded to modify the actions of the profligate and subtle Wharton, into colours more answerable to the change of my view in the ultimate result of his character; and, though I am aware it may be more pleasurable to the generality of my young readers, than had I deepened the tints to the original tone; still I lament, and the more intensely, from the very conviction mentioned above, and my dear critic unites with me in the same, that I had not continued my first design; and made the warning example of a man so endowed, and with so misusing his great endowments, end as my first plan had laid down.

I sincerely blame painting a union between gay, splendid, and mischievous vices, with any of the truly generous virtues; for they never did, nor never can, exist in the same breast: and this, to my infinite regret, I have drawn in the character of Duke Wharton. Such men may talk largely of the noble virtues; (they always openly despise the humble ones! and that may be a test of a real principle of goodness!) but when they come to the practice of any really disinterested act, it *never is done*, unless it have gazers on to give

it its fame! In sketching the duplicity of Wharton, and of so many of his courtly rivals and opponents, I have been too well borne out in the annals of diplomacy in every age. But with regard to individuals sustaining its high and complicated duties, I have known most admirable examples of truth and honour; names, dare I mention them, which might well shine on the same unsullied page with those of men like Sir William Temple, and Stanhope, the first Lord Harrington; who were the revered of all nations, though they stood unswerving advocates for the rightful interests of their own.

Some of such respected statesmen gave me a kind suffrage on the accuracy of my little book, and narrative of the transactions at the Court of Vienna, during the residence of my young hero and his father there. And the same class of readers could bear sufficient witness, that the extraordinary adventures of the Duke of Ripperda, in Spain and in Barbary, were neither imaginary nor exaggerated. That his son sealed the awful penitent's eyes, on an at last Christian deathbed, was a boon to filial piety, with which my pen did, indeed, exult, to crown my story.

J. P.

July, 1832.

P. S. After writing the above, a recent heavy affliction has prevented the author adding notes, &c. to this edition of the work, which before were in her intention.

THE

PASTOR'S FIRE-SIDE.

CHAPTER I.

It was late one winterly evening in September, when a boat, borne along by a single sail, passed along the narrow sea which divides Lindisfarne from the mainland, and moored itself within the small bay of the island. The moon was beginning to rise; and by her silvering outline, already distinguished the venerable relics of Saint Cuthbert's monastery from the shadows of twilight.

Two persons, wrapped in large cloaks, and followed by one who seemed a servant, rose from the boat; and giving a piece of gold to their solitary navigator, stepped on shore. The elder of the two made the sign of the cross upon his breast, and with his eyes bent to the ground walked slowly forward. The younger performed the same act of devotion, though in a less fixed manner, and shivering as he looked up to the flying clouds, followed his companion. Having proceeded over sand and shingle without discerning any thing like an inhabited dwelling, the travellers began to doubt the boatman's information respecting the situation of their purposed lodgings; and, looking around for some other intelligence, perceived a group of fishermen on a shelve of the rock. By the assistance of his servant, the youth scrambled up the acclivity, and enquired the way to the Reverend Richard Athelstone's. One of the men, raising himself from the heap of gathered nets they

had been drying on the rocks, pointed along the top of the cliff, and told his questioner to keep on, west of the abbey, when he would soon see the church, and the Pastor's house beside it.

The travellers proceeded a little way in the direction given: but finding that the dubious light bewildered them, not distinguishing rocks from ruins, the younger returned to the fisherman, and begged he would conduct them to Mr. Athelstone's. This request was obeyed with the same direct compliance as his question had been answered; and the man throwing his net over his shoulder, trudged on before the travellers. The elder pursued his way in devout abstraction. His eyes were fixed on the distant tower of the monastery. It stood alone on the bright horizon; and seemed, to his musing fancy, like the still hovering shade of the glorified saint of the island.

This path to the Pastor's dwelling lay by the ruins of the wall which had once surrounded the monastery. As the travellers approached it, the roofless aisles and broken arches stood white in the moon-beam; and the windows, partially obscured by the withered stonecrop which sprung from their mouldering columns, threw a chequered light on the half-sunk monuments below. The youth, fatigued in limbs, and depressed in spirits, drew near his companion. The elder traveller pressed the nerveless arm that now rested upon his, and said in a low voice, "What desolation is here! Ah, my son, how can we expect peace in the counsels, or virtue in the conduct of a people who thus dishonour the tombs of the saints."

"Alas, my lord," replied the young man, "if we must estimate the piety of nations by the unanimity of their councils, we have not much reason to congratulate ourselves on the holiness of Spain! Why," added he with asperity, "did her vacillating policy drag us from peaceful Italy? But for that, we might never have visited these desert shores."

"Ferdinand," rejoined his father, "the disease of your heart makes you misjudge your country. Spain has her errors. But no comparison can be justly drawn between a people that respect the Faith, even to hallowing the ashes

of its apostles; and a race of men, who trample alike on the rights of their kings, and the ordinances of the church — No good can come to such a people!"

The young man shivered, and forced a smile; "At least," exclaimed he, "no good can come to us, in so excommunicated a land:—though I shall not be sorry to shelter myself from its cutting blast, even within the condemned cell of the heretic *Cura* of the island."

The travellers continued to follow their guide over a rough road covered with loose stones, and rendered intricate by numerous stunted trees which grew in straggling loneliness amongst the detached masses of the decaying monastery. Through the shadowy arches of what had once been a passage to the west cloisters, they espied a distant light.

"For your sake, my son," said the elder stranger, "I hope that portends we are near houses!"

"I hope so too," rejoined Ferdinand, "but I also fear, it may be only the lantern of some vessel, more lucky than we were, passing this desolate rock."

Having made their way through the varied gloom of the ruins, they came out on a smooth sheep-path. The abbey now lay behind them. Before them, rose the spire of the parish church; and near it, in holy fellowship, stood the parsonage; from whose ivy-latticed window still streamed the friendly ray which had guided them to its gate.

"This be our pastor's,—and God's blessing abide with him and his!" said the fisherman, pointing with a bow to the house. Ferdinand put money into the man's hand; and then followed his father and their servant through a wicket into a little green court. They crossed its soft grass, and stooping beneath a low stone porch, knocked at the house-door. It was opened by a hoary-headed servant, of a hale and cheerful aspect. The elder stranger asked for the Reverend Richard Athelstone. The old man immediately opened a door at his right hand; and without other reply than a respectful bow, ushered the travellers into the presence of his master.

The venerable pastor of Lindisfarne advanced to meet his visiters; who, though unannounced, he saw by their

air were foreigners and gentlemen. The elder apologised for their appearance at so late an hour; saying, they had arrived from Holland at Berwick that morning in the midst of a storm. "But," said he, "when the tempest subsided towards evening, I became too impatient to tread the sacred shore of Lindisfarne; and to deliver a packet intrusted to me by the Grand-Pensionary Hensius, to delay my coming until another day."

As the stranger spoke, he presented the packet. Mr. Athelstone received it with a hospitable smile; and turning to a lady who sat with two younger ones at a work-table near the fire; "Mrs. Coningsby, my dear niece," said he, "welcome these gentlemen; they come from a friend of your father's."

The lady rose; and gracefully obeyed, by expressing her reverence for the Grand-Pensionary; and the pleasure she felt in seeing Landisfarne honoured by his remembrance in the persons of his friends. She then introduced the young ladies as her daughters. The eldest she called Cornelia, and the youngest Alice. They cast down their eyes, and bowed their fair necks to the strangers, as their mother named them; and when, on observing the pale countenance of Ferdinand, she invited the two gentlemen to draw nearer the fire, the sisters moved their chairs back, and pursued their needlework with redoubled industry.

Mr. Athelstone took a hasty survey of the Grand-Pensionary's letter; and folding it up, repeated his former polite greeting with the cordial addition of taking the strangers each by the hand.

"Pleased as I was to receive any friend of the Baron Hensius," said he, "how must my pleasure be increased, when I see in that friend the Marquis Santa Cruz!"

"The Marquis Santa Cruz!" repeated Mrs. Coningsby, in a tone of delightful surprise.

The Pastor smiled — "Your name, my lord, has long been with us. Fame had given it to the world at large; but it was brought to our remote shores by your noble antagonist, Prince Eugene of Savoy."

With a bow to the implied compliment, the Marquis enquired how recently the Prince had been in England.

"Not very lately," replied Mr. Athelstone; "my acquaintance with his Highness must be dated one and twenty years back; in the spring of 1704, when he came to England on a secret mission from the Emperor of Germany. Having gained our queen's concurrence to support the Imperialists against Bavaria, Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough embarked for Holland. Stress of weather drove their vessel on this coast. I then inhabited Bamborough Castle, during the absence of my brother Sir Hedworth Athelstone; and going to the beach to offer the usual assistance to distressed mariners, I discovered my friend the Duke, and his noble compeer, in two nameless personages. They took up their residence with me till the tempest subsided, and it lasted many days; but remaining unknown to the county, they gave the whole of their society to myself and my niece. It was then, my lord, that in discoursing on the great and good of all countries, Prince Eugene named with friendship the Marquis Santa Cruz; who, he said, had baffled his best military skill the preceding year in Italy."

An answering glow of generous admiration suffused the face of the Marquis. "Eugene of Savoy," returned he, "can afford such acknowledgments. And, that I did discover, and baffle his designs before the dyke of Zero, I have ever considered the proudest fortune which has hitherto been granted to my military career. Since that period, I have often met the Prince, both in the field and in the cabinet: and in every character, whether as soldier or as statesman, he has manifested that nobleness of soul which commands alike the confidence of friends and of enemies."

A blush overspread the fine, though matron features of Mrs. Coningsby. "Ah, my dear uncle," cried she, "why does not Louis hear this of your favourite hero, from the Marquis Santa Cruz?" She rose as she spoke, and left the room to enquire for the object of her interest.

"Does Mrs. Coningsby speak of her son?" asked the Marquis.

"No," said the Pastor, "the young man she alludes to

is the son of her elder sister, now in a better world. His father you doubtless know; the Baron de Ripperda."

"I have not been in Spain these ten years," replied the Marquis; "but I know the Baron is now there; and introducing plans of internal policy, worthy the emulation of his own times, and the gratitude of future ages. Before happy circumstances restored him to Spain, it was never my good fortune to meet him in any of my accidental visits to the Netherlands."

Mr. Athelstone and his noble guest continued their discourse on the public history of the Baron de Ripperda: remarking, with some loyal animadversions, on his father Don Juan de Montemar, Duke de Ripperda, who, in resentment for some slight from his sovereign, left Spain for the Netherlands; and, joining himself to the United States, exchanged his Spanish rank for that of a northern baron. While the Marquis regretted that the noble malecontent's son, the present illustrious Ripperda, had ever belonged to any other country than that of his ancestors, he expatiated with the pride of a Spaniard on the talents which were now reclaimed by their parent land. Mr. Athelstone, who had all the old fashioned notions respecting *amor patriæ*, rejoiced that the satisfactory accomplishment of Baron de Ripperda's mission as ambassador from the Netherlands to Madrid, had empowered him to sever himself with honour from that country; and to resume his hereditary rights in Spain, in the manner best calculated to re-establish his house, and transmit the ancient glories of his family unimpaired to posterity.

While the Pastor and his guest were engaged in this conversation, Ferdinand leaned exhausted in his chair, and had leisure to survey the domestic scene around him; so different from the solitude he had anticipated in *the condemned cell of the heretic Cura of the island!*—From the window of the room in which he now sat, still issued the light he had seen from afar; and which had beaconed his weary steps to his present comfortable station by its source; a cheerful fire, and a cluster of blazing candles on its chimney-piece.

Ferdinand could not have been so long in Italy without

forming a taste in architecture; and he contemplated with admiring curiosity this specimen of Gothic workmanship. It was of a cinquefoil shape, supported by short columns on brackets, and adorned with a projecting frieze, on which stood the lighted branches, with alabaster vases full of autumnal flowers. It appeared to have been translated from some building of older date; and, indeed, little more than a century before, this very arch had mantled the abbot's hearth in the good monastery of Lindisfarne.

Ferdinand looked next at the oak-panelled walls of the room, enlivened by a range of fine portraits in carved ebony frames. These, with a cabinet of curious china, a harpsichord, a well-stored bookcase, and the usual complement of sofas and chairs, completed the furniture. He did not take so cursory a view of its inhabitants. The venerable master of the house sat on one side of the fire-place, talking with the Marquis. His silvered hair and benign countenance, blanched and worn by seventy winters, seemed to announce how nearly the divine spirit within had shaken off its earthly tabernacle. The Marquis had never before regarded an avowed minister of the Reformation, without a distance in his manner that proclaimed, *I am near pollution!* but now he sat listening to the Pastor with so cordial an air, that Ferdinand murmured to himself; "Ah! my father, it is too late for your unhappy son, should your present feelings towards that good man, indeed, draw away its only prejudice from your noble heart!" He sighed heavily, and turned his attention to the other side of the room.

The sisters had withdrawn their chairs far from the fire-side circle, and were plying their needles with indefatigable diligence. Cornelia's raven hair was braided back from her polished brow, and confined in a knot with a gold bodkin. The majestic contour of her features suited well with her Roman name; and the simplicity of the plain white garment in which she was arrayed, harmonised with the modest dignity of a figure, which proclaimed in every movement that nobility of soul needs no emblazoning from ornament! As her fair hand traversed the embroidery frame, Ferdinand turned from these lofty beauties, to the

gentle Alice; whose charms, if of a feebler, were of a subtler force. Her head, which moved about rather oftener than her sister's, in search of silk, scissors, and needles, gave free scope to the contemplation of the young Spaniard. She appeared several years younger than Cornelia. Her form was fairy in its proportions; slight, airy, and apparently impalpable to aught but the touch of a sylph. Her azure eyes, glancing around for what she sought, shone so lucidly bright from under her flaxen locks, that Ferdinand thought he had never seen eyes so beautiful; "Never," said he to himself, "so divinely innocent; never so irresistibly exhilarating."

Some envenomed recollections caused him to withdraw his gaze; but he soon looked again upon Alice; and longed to hear her speak, while a sudden self-gratulation on how fluently he could himself discourse in English, animated his before languid features. He observed her turn her head towards the yet uncurtained window. The moon was now holding her bright course in the heavens, without meeting the passing shadow of a single cloud. He seized the opportunity to address the sisters, and remarked the beauty of the night.

"It is calmer than usual, after so tempestuous a day," observed Cornelia.

"I am glad the winds are quiet!" said Alice; "for we may now look for Louis without fear of the breakers."

Ferdinand enquired whether her cousin were to cross the sea that night.

"We hope so," replied she; "he went yesterday to Bamborough Castle; and I am sure nothing but the storm prevented his returning to us this morning."

"Whatever may be the attractions of Bamborough Castle," rejoined Ferdinand, "I cannot be surprised your cousin should prefer his home to all other places." He accompanied this remark with that sort of smile and bow to Alice, which a woman of the world would have understood as a compliment to herself; but Alice was too ignorant of the gallantries of fashionable society, to see any thing in this, but the obvious meaning of the words. Cornelia received the speech as her sister had done; and

exclaimed with a sigh, "I wish Louis did prefer his home to all other places!"

"Why say that, Cornelia?" said Alice; "you know how he despises the people he meets at the Castle; and you cannot seriously doubt our dear Louis's preference of home to all other places!"

Ferdinand did not perceive the grounds of conclusion which the fair Alice drew from her argument; he admired, however, the brightening eyes with which she uttered her own conviction; though he could not forbear a doubting smile when he observed the anxious glance she cast towards the door, on a little noise in the hall, which occurred just as she concluded her last confident assertion.

Cornelia did not reply, but with a gentle sigh pensively resumed her embroidery. Alice now became confused; regarding the silence of her sister as a reproof for her having said so much before a stranger, she turned away her head, and with trembling hands recommenced her work. Ferdinand did not withdraw his eyes from the little table. He wished to see the fortunate cousin, upon whom these lovely sisters lavished so much solicitude; and he was curious to know who the inhabitants of the castle were, whose attractions could excite jealousy in young women so full of charms.

While he was thus ruminating, Mrs. Coningsby entered, to lead her uncle's guests to the supper-room. Before they obeyed her hospitable summons, the Marquis requested that he and his son might retire to disencumber themselves from their travelling accoutrements; and when they had withdrawn, the Pastor took that interval to inform his niece and her daughters that the noble Spaniards were to be his guests for some days. He read, apart, to Mrs. Coningsby, a passage in the Baron Hensius's letter, which mentioned that the health of Don Ferdinand d'Osorio, the Marquis's only son, was the primary object of his visit to England. It appeared, by this account, that on the Marquis's recall from his diplomatic situation in Italy, he proceeded to Vienna, to negotiate, what afterwards turned out an unsuccessful mission. He had previously seized the opportunity of preliminary despatches, to send his son be-

fore him, to visit the Marchioness's family, who resided in that city. But he soon saw reason to repent this indulgence. When the Marquis arrived, he found the young man no longer himself. He had become the dupe of artifice; and was bound to the Austrian capital, with the most fatal bonds. The distressed father knew no alternative, but to apply secretly to Spain for the royal mandate, to send both himself and his son on a seeming official tour. Distance, and change of objects, were what he aimed at for the unhappy youth; and, taking Holland in their course, when they reached Amsterdam the physicians there recommended a sea voyage, and the bracing air of a still more northerly climate. Ferdinand was indifferent to what became of him, but said he had no objection to visit Scotland. The Marquis recollected that Lindisfarne, the *Holy Island* of unnumbered saints, lay in the way; and full of parental anxiety, he formed a wish, which he communicated to Baron Hensius, of propitiating a peculiar blessing on this part of his journey, by paying his vows at the shrine of Saint Cuthbert.

"My friend warns me," continued the Pastor, addressing his younger nieces as well as their mother, "that the Marquis Santa Cruz is a Roman Catholic in the most superstitious sense of the term; — that his mind, enlightened on every other subject, is here under an impenetrable cloud. Indeed, his errand hither is a sufficient proof of his mental darkness. He brings his son to this island, *to touch the dead man's bones and be healed!* Setting up a human idol, before the living presence of his Saviour, who has only to will it, and it is done! Oh, my children here is a lesson to humble the pride of intellect, to fill you with awe before the Creator of your reason, and the divine revealer of his word! Reason, when hearkening to revelation, must be as *a little child;* not as an idiot, that receives all, and does all, without understanding the nature of the command; — but as a little child, humble and intelligent; eager to apprehend the truth, and ready to obey it. Such a little child as that, which appeared with the Doctors in the Temple, hearing and asking them questions. Mark you! He did not then *speak as one having*

authority, but he came to hear and enquire. In all things, *He* is our example; and that example bids us search the Scriptures for truth; and to apply to God alone, through one Mediator, for salvation here and hereafter."

Mrs. Coningsby did not answer her uncle, but pressed the hands of her listening daughters; who cast down their eyes in reverence of their beloved teacher and his divine subject. Mr. Athelstone paused a few moments, and resumed.

"The Grand-Pensionary, being aware how happy I should be to see the Marquis Santa Cruz, rather encouraged than dissuaded him from his purposed pilgrimage; and, now he is here, my dear nieces, we must do our best to welcome and to cheer both him and his son."

"I thought the young Spanish nobleman looked very ill," observed Alice, in a tone of pity; "he leaned so languidly in his chair; and his large dark eyes moved so heavily, it seemed a labour for him to turn them even from me to my sister, though we sat close together. Poor young man! And how kindly he asked about Louis! — Did not you, Cornelia, think he looked ill?"

"Indeed," said her sister, "I scarcely noticed his looks at all; which I am sorry for. He must have thought us most unfeelingly inattentive, to allow an invalid to sit so long in a hot room with that heavy cloak on."

"I rather think the fault was mine," rejoined their mother, "but the remembrances of past days had totally obscured present objects. And as another proof of it, my dear sir," said she, turning to the Pastor, "I had forgotten to tell you that the boatman has returned from Bamborough without Louis; and brings this message from Sir Anthony, that his nephew will remain at the Castle for some days longer."

Further remarks were prevented by the re-entrance of the travellers. They were conducted by their hospitable host to the supper-room; and after partaking of its northern fare with good appetites, Mrs. Coningsby led the Marquis and his son to the door of their apartments, where she bade them adieu for the night.

CHAPTER II.

FERDINAND arose next morning at a late hour, refreshed and lighter in spirits than he had felt for a long time. The day was bright and balmy; and when he descended to the breakfast-room, the Marquis glanced at his renovated appearance, and inwardly ejaculated, "Already that cheerful countenance bears witness to the efficacy of this blessed spot!"

The family of the Pastor were assembled round the table; Mrs. Coningsby presided over the dispersion of her fragrant tea; and her daughters, blooming with the freshness of the dewy flowers, did the honours of the coffee and kneaded cakes. Social converse, augmenting in interest with its prolongation, succeeded the hospitable meal, till Mr. Athelstone observed Ferdinand turn his eyes wistfully towards the open window. The light foliage of the spruce, which bent towards it, floated into the room on the gentle impulse of a soft south wind; and the aromatic breath that followed seemed to be regarded by the young Spaniard as an invitation to taste its fragrance nearer. The Pastor, who anticipated the wishes of invalids with the same solicitude he would administer a salutary medicine, turned to his young nieces, and desired they would put on their hats, and introduce Don Ferdinand to their Michaelmas daisies. The ladies withdrew; and Ferdinand, not requiring a second permission, was soon in the little porch, ready to accompany his fair conductors.

The youthful party had scarcely withdrawn, before a note was brought from Bamborough Castle. It was in answer to one the Pastor had despatched that morning to Sir Anthony Athelstone, to explain the necessity of Louis's immediate return to the island. Mr. Athelstone took the letter, and read as follows:—

"*To the Rev. Richard Athelstone.*

"Sir Anthony Athelstone is very sensible of the respect due to his reverend uncle, and to his noble guests; but

Louis de Montemar being engaged with a hunting party, it is impossible he can have the honour of waiting upon them.

"Bamborough Castle,
Saturday Morn."

"I believe, sir," said the old servant who had delivered the letter, "the Duke of Wharton is at the Castle."

At this intimation an unusual colour spread over the face of Mr. Athelstone. "Peter, that cannot be!"

Peter bowed his grey head, and respectfully answered,—"The lad, sir, who brought that note, told me a fine duke from foreign parts, with a company of ladies and gentlemen, came yesterday through all the storm to the Castle; and they were so merry and frolicsome, they sat up all night singing outlandish songs, which the butler, Thomas, who understands tongues, told him were arrant Jocobite."

Mr. Athelstone rose hastily from his seat. "Peter, I am afraid you are right." Peter bowed again, and withdrew. Mr. Athelstone re-seated himself, in evident discomposure.

"I remember the Duke of Wharton eight years ago in Paris," said the Marquis. "I think it was in the summer of 1716. He was then a very young man, hardly of age; certainly not arrived at the years of discretion; for, with a genius that equalled him in some respects to the maturest minds in France, he was perpetually reminding us of his real juvenility, by the boyish extravagance of his passions. I have since heard that time has not tamed them."

"It seldom does," exclaimed the Pastor, "when the reins have once been given to their impulse. Oh, my dear lord! wherever human passion is, there the law of reason and lawless appetite contend, like Satan and the archangel. Duke Wharton has yielded the mastery to the ill spirit; and he is the less pardonable, his intellectual endowments being equal to any resistance. If the man who only *hides his one talent*, meet condemnation; what must be the eternal fate of him, who debases a countless portion, to decorate the loathsomeness of sin?"

Mr. Athelstone paused a few moments, and then added,

—"I have so great a horror of the contagion of such characters, that I made it a point with Sir Anthony, he would never, willingly, bring his nephew into the company of this dangerous nobleman; and how it has happened now I cannot guess. Some unexpected circumstance must have brought him to the Castle: for you know, Mrs. Coningsby, your brother has always been scrupulous of a promise."

"Hitherto," replied she; "but if we have rightly explained Peter's account, Sir Anthony's present detention of Louis——" She paused, as if conscious of having said too much in the presence of a stranger.

The Pastor looked more disturbed. "When the tide serves in the afternoon," cried he, "I will cross to Bamborough myself; and if I find that my confidence has been abused, I shall then know my course."

"Not that my uncle doubts our nephew's steadiness, in despising the follies of Duke Wharton," said Mrs. Coningsby, addressing their guest; "but no engagements ought to be broken with impunity."

"Pardon me, madam," returned the Marquis, "if I say, that we should cruelly betray our young people, if we did not so far doubt their steadiness, as always to do our utmost to withdraw them from every separate temptation to vice or folly. I hold it as great a sin to rush unnecessarily into occasions of moral contest, as to fall by the temptation when it comes unsought. Man should neither tempt himself, nor suffer others to be tempted, when he can put in a prevention. I am, therefore, thoroughly of Mr. Athelstone's opinion, not to allow Mr. de Montemar to remain an hour that he can prevent, within the influence of the Duke of Wharton."

The Pastor was roused from anxious meditation by the last remark of Santa Cruz; and as Mrs. Coningsby soon after left the room, he put his hand upon the arm of the Marquis, and conducting him by a side door into his library, "My good lord," said he, "your observations are so just, that, as I may appear to have acted inconsistently with what I conscientiously approve, by having permitted my nephew to go at all where he is liable to meet

the Duke, you must allow me to narrate the peculiar circumstances which compelled my assent."

"I shall be glad, reverend sir," returned the Marquis, "to hear what can be urged in extenuation of any indulgence which subjects the waxen nature of youth to the impressions of perverting society. By painful experience, I know the trial to be perilous." The last sentence was followed by a sudden coldness in his air towards the Pastor, which passed unfelt, because it was unobserved.

Unconscious of what really actuated the remarks of his auditor, Mr. Athelstone looked pensively down for a few moments, and then resumed. "I know not how to make your lordship perfectly understand my situation and apology, unless you permit me to preface both with a little family history."

The Marquis bowed, and Mr. Athelstone proceeded.

"My only brother, the late Sir Hedworth Forster Athelstone, was the father of the present Sir Anthony and of two daughters. The eldest, Louisa, was the mother of Louis de Montemar; and the youngest, Catherine, you have seen in Mrs. Coningsby. My brother's wife died the same year in which her husband received the commands of his sovereign to go ambassador extraordinary to the Netherlands. Louisa's health having been impaired by attendance on her mother, Sir Hedworth made her the companion of his embassy. At the Hague they met the Baron de Ripperda. He was struck with my niece at first sight. And indeed she was the most beautiful creature these eyes ever beheld! My Lord, you will see a manly copy of this angelic being in her not unworthy son. Before she went abroad, she had refused the hands of some of the first men in England; for her accomplishments and her virtues were equal to her beauty. My brother had always left her to her own choice. He admired the Baron de Ripperda; and when she granted him permission to address her, Sir Hedworth sanctioned her acquiescence with pride and joy. I think I can recollect the very words he wrote to me on the day of her nuptials. I have often repeated them, though not lately; — yet I will recall them."

The venerable man leaned back in his chair, and shutting his eyes in silent recollection, in a few minutes repeated these words of the letter.

"Congratulate me, my brother!" said he: "this morning I have bestowed the hand of our darling Louisa upon William de Montemar Baron de Ripperda. I need not enlarge in his praise: I have named the Baron de Ripperda; and in that name all human excellence is comprised. My full heart, overflowing with happiness, has but one wish ungratified. Richard, am I ungrateful to the Giver of all good? But my tears are now falling, that I enjoy it without the participation of her beloved mother. Oh, that she had lived to see this blissful day!" The pious narrator paused a moment, drew his hand over his eyes, and then resumed his story in his usual manner.

"Thus did my brother write, in the exultation of his heart. And every succeeding letter contained similar intelligence of Louisa's happiness; of the high-minded patriotism of her husband; of the honour in which he was held by the States; and of the anxious joy which agitated them all, in the prospect of an heir to this treasure of felicity. Think then, my dear Marquis, what were the feelings with which I read a long-expected letter from the Hague! I had impatiently awaited what had seemed so strangely withheld. It was to tell me of the birth of the anticipated blessing. The letter came, sealed with black. — An heir had been born according to hope, but the mother was no more. Louisa's delicate frame had perished in the trial of that dreadful period. She lingered three weeks after the morning of her child's birth, and then died in the arms of her husband and of her father. Next day the afflicted parent wrote to me. How differently did this letter conclude from the one in which he announced her marriage!"

Again the Pastor leaned back in his chair, and closed his eyes; but he also pressed them down with his hand, as he proceeded to quote his brother's words.

"I come to you, Richard, with all that remains to me of my too precious Louisa. — So young, so beautiful, so beloved! — Ripperda has resigned her infant to my care. When he consented to my earnest supplication, he pressed

the poor unconscious babe to his weeping face, and then putting him into my arms: — Take him, Sir Hedworth! (cried he) — what compensation is too dear to the father of my lost Louisa? He then rushed from the room, and I have not seen him since. I thank my God, her mother is spared this last blow, which has laid my grey hairs in the dust."

As Mr. Athelstone closed these remembrances, with a silent address to the Being in whose peace now rested the parent with his child, the Marquis wiped the starting tears from his eyes, — a pause of a few minutes ensued; and then the good man, turning with a serene aspect to his auditor, resumed.

" My brother returned to Bamborough Castle. He found me there, with his sole remaining daughter. Early in the succeeding year, Catherine gave her hand to Mr. Coningsby. Not to leave my brother quite alone, I henceforth continued to divide my time between the exercise of my parochial duties, and assisting him in the consoling task of unfolding the mental faculties of my infant nephew. But the drooping spirits of Sir Hedworth were daily depressed by cares more heavy to be borne than anxiety for the sick, or sorrow for the dead. Almost every post brought him accounts of his son's follies at college, or in town; and few were the weeks which passed without calling on his purse for some disbursement to redeem the pledged honour of this unthinking young man. Mr. Coningsby died the sixth year after his marriage; and not leaving a son, his entailed property went to the male heir; but his daughters have, nevertheless, very noble fortunes. Sir Hedworth and myself were constituted their guardians; and as the best means of rendering them protection, my brother invited their mother from the dismal associations of a jointure-house, to her former home. Poor Catherine gladly obeyed the paternal voice: — and time went smoothly over our heads, till the day on which Louis de Montemar attained his tenth year. It was always a sacred anniversary with my brother; and on that evening, while kneeling in his closet, he was called to a blessed re-union with her he had so long mourned.

" My nephew Anthony hurried from London to take possession of his inheritance. He expressed satisfaction at finding his uncle and his young nephew in the Castle; and requested his sister to honour his table by keeping her place at its head. Notwithstanding the happy promise of this conduct (for Sir Anthony is kind and liberal to objects in his sight), we soon found that Bamborough, under its new master, was not a fit residence for Mrs. Coningsby and her children. In short, he was too much a man of pleasure to allow of even the common restraints usual in a family on the recent loss of its head. Whilst the hatchment was yet over the door, the Castle continued to overflow with visiters of the gayest order. Hunting in the morning, feasting through the day, and revelling all the night, formed the unvarying diary of the so lately revered Bamborough. In vain I remonstrated with my nephew on these pursuits; on the evils of his example to the county; and the prejudice he was doing to his fortune and his reputation. To be rid of my arguments, he frequently admitted their reasonableness; but they produced no amendment in his conduct. In short, the castle of my fathers had now become a Babylon, from which I saw the necessity of bearing away my innocent charges, while they were yet too young to be contaminated. In right of my mother, Lady Cornelia Percy, Morewick Hall, on the Coquet, belongs to me. But as my pastoral care was constantly required at Bamborough, or in this island, I had never resided on my inheritance. I now wished to make it the home of my niece, and her children. She gladly embraced my proposal. And the young Louis, though the indulged plaything of the whole party, so far from expressing regret at leaving the Castle, heard our arrangement with joy. This may appear more than natural in a boy hardly eleven years of age; but a little affair which took place at that time will make his acquiescence very credible.

" It was during the Christmas of the very spring in which your lordship met Duke Wharton at Paris, that he made his brilliant but baneful appearance at Bamborough. He took an immediate fancy to Louis; who was a fine spirited boy, full of enterprise and invincible good-humour.

The Duke delighted in betting on this child's youthful talents, against the maturest acquirements in the Castle. He exulted in the leaps he made him take on horseback; on the precision of his eye in firing at a mark; and the dexterity with which such a stripling disarmed every man but himself in the practice of the foils. Even in this there was much to blame. But one evening, when Sir Anthony and the Duke, wearied of the rest of the company, had withdrawn to another room, and were sitting over their wine, a sudden whim seized their own half-tipsy fancies, to send Louis in masquerade, to surprise the boisterous group below. Louis was summoned; and, innocent of their intention, hastened to his uncle. In the ardour of their frolic, they told him they meant to dress him in vine branches, and priming him with wine, introduce him as the festive god to the worship of the revellers in the dining-room. The natural good sense of the boy started at the proposal; and he modestly refused to comply. They persuaded, they flattered, they threatened; but all in vain. Both resolutely, and with tears, he declared he would not, for his life, do any thing so wicked. Sir Anthony's passionate nature was always in a blaze at opposition; and now mad with intoxication, he threw the helpless child on the floor, and holding him there, called on his profligate companion to give him the Burgundy. Wharton obeyed; and the inhuman uncle poured so great a quantity down the throat of his struggling victim, that the poor child was taken up insensible. He was carried to bed, and passed the remainder of the night in delirium and fever.

"I was then on one of my occasional visits to Lindisfarne. But on my return next day, the whole was told me by Mrs. Coningsby. Full of horror at the relation, I gave instant orders for our departure; and was passing along the gallery before the servants, who were supporting the suffering child to the carriage, when I encountered my graceless nephew. 'Anthony!' cried I, in the burst of my indignation; 'you have committed an outrage against the morals and life of this innocent child, that will cry against you at the gates of Eternal Justice!' Sir Anthony stood confounded; but Duke Wharton, who was just at his

back, with affected solemnity, exclaimed—'It is a prophet who speaks!—Let us take care that in to-morrow's hunt, the foxes do not ape the bears of old, and turn upon and rend us!'—The sarcasm of the young libertine, and his irreverent allusion to Scripture, recalled me to a sense of my own reprehensible violence; and turning again to my nephew with a more collected manner, 'Sir Anthony, (said I) I do not reply to your companion; having no hope that human reasoning can make any good impression on a mind which studies revelation only to use it to blasphemy. But for you, the son of a virtuous father, and a pious mother!—Recall to your remembrance their happy lives, their honourable reputations, and their blessed deaths! And, notwithstanding all your wit, your merriment, and your splendour, your heart will whisper, that in comparison with them, you are wretched, despised, and now stand on the brink of everlasting perdition!' Sir Anthony remained silent and confused; but the hardened Duke, making me a gay bow, put his arm through the Baronet's, and with a jerk turned him into the billiard-room.

"Eight years elapsed before I saw my ill-directed nephew again. Having established a truly Christian minister at Bamborough, I henceforth passed the winter months at Morewick Hall with Mrs. Coningsby. And how different from the society of the Castle, was that which visited our residence, and assisted to develope the opening minds of our young charges! Sir Richard Steele, Mr. Craggs, with Lord Cowper, Mr. Addison, and the exemplary Mrs. Rowe, were severally our guests. In short, my dear sir, I drew around me a kind of college for my pupils; and besides the persons named, many others of humbler note, but equal merit, were our constant visiters. One half of the year I devoted to the inspection of my curate's ministry; and, for that purpose, fixed my summer residence in this island. Louis always accompanied me to Lindisfarne; as I considered it my duty, as well as my delight, to share with his various tutors, the anxious task of turning to good account the rich soil of his mind. His nature is so enquiring, and, alas, so ambitious, we had rather to restrain than to stimulate his abilities; and they have ever pointed

to a military career. I tried to incline him to the calmer paths of life; but it was stemming a torrent. His spirit is determined to excess. And having fixed his heart on the reputation of a Nassau or a Marlborough, he directs his studies with an undeviating aim to that point. If he begin any language, science, or art, he pursues it steadily till he gains either a perfect knowledge of its principles; or, at least, acquires as much as his teacher can give him. He will not hear of a slight knowledge of any thing; therefore, what he does not wish to master, he never attempts at all. In short, his talents take the form of passions, and are not to be exhausted by the continuance or impetuosity of their course."

From strong interest, the Marquis had forborne to interrupt Mr. Athelstone; but now he could not help exclaiming—"Oh, sir, what a perilous character have you described!—How great is the responsibility of the man who is to guide and impel this youth! Virtue and vice contend alike for the direction of such spirits:—and you are answerable to his father and to Heaven, that these powerful impulses should not be turned to evil!"

"I know it," replied the Pastor, devoutly bowing his head to the Almighty Being to whom he especially owed this responsibility; "and at present, I trust, those impulses are blameless. His heart overflows with good-will to every created thing; and (as he often says with a gay smile) he seems born with no other concern but to be happy, and to do his best to make others as happy as himself. Dear child!" exclaimed the old man, with glistening eyes;—"if that be his commission, he knows he fulfils it here!—ah! the sound of his voice, or the tread of his foot in the passage, is sufficient at any time to raise my head from my severest studies; and to make his aunt and cousins start from their chairs, to welcome their gladdening Louis!"

"And yet you trust this gay, this buoyant!—this young man, constituted by nature to be only too sensible to the world's allurements; you trust him to the temptations of his uncle's roof?"

"Because," replied the Pastor, "they are no tempt-

ations to him. Setting aside the principles with which religion fortifies his heart, his taste is too pure not to be disgusted with the coarse jollity of Sir Anthony's usual boon companions. These sots see nothing in their wassal-bowl but the wine and its spices. It is the possible visits of Duke Wharton, and a few of his Anacreontic associates, that excite my apprehension. He drugs the cup with the wreath of genius. The wit, the grace, the sorceries of that man, indeed, fill me with alarm: and from his society, as I would snatch a swimmer from the verge of a whirl-pool, I shall hasten to bear away my yet uncorrupted nephew."

The Marquis enquired how, with these sentiments, and after the rupture with Sir Anthony, Mr. Athelstone had ever suffered Louis de Montemar to touch such a vortex again. Mr. Athelstone apologised for having digressed so long from this most necessary part of his narrative; and proceeded to relate the accident which re-introduced the uncle and nephew to each other. What he succinctly related, is more particularly given thus:—

In the autumn of the preceding year, Louis obtained his guardian's permission to accompany a neighbouring gentleman to the Red-deer hunt at Blair Athol in Scotland. On the first day, several fine harts were roused and slain. But just as the two Northumbrians were seating themselves on a high wooded cliff to take some refreshment after a hot pursuit, the forester who attended them approached crouching on hands and knees, and silently made a sign, pointing to the glen beneath. On looking where he levelled, they saw two fresh stags upon a rock below, which projected over the river Tilt. Louis took aim, and shot one of them on the edge of the precipice; the animal fell headlong into the stream; and the victor, with his followers, hastened down the glen to secure his prize. About the same instant, a huntsman, who had been with the foremost all day, espied from an opposite direction the companion of the slain stag, in full flight. He fired, and wounded the creature in the haunches. The disabled deer slackened his pace, and the huntsman let a hound loose after him, which held him at bay on a high bank; but

the stag recovered courage, and broke away again. Another dog was then unleashed, which brought him to a stand in a deep dell, filled by the current of a mountain-stream. This second hound ran in upon his antagonist, and seized him between the horns. The stag gored him from shoulder to shoulder, and the huntsman, alarmed for the life of his dog, made a spring into the water, to shoot the deer without danger to the hound. In his haste, the man fell, and with his gun under him. At this moment the Northumbrians came up. Louis's companion rashly unloosed their dogs, to assist the struggling hounds of the huntsman. The deer, the dogs, all were at once upon the prostrate man. He called for help. — The stag's foot was on his breast: — the hounds crushed him as they sprung forward, and hung on the furious animal. The deer's eye-balls flashed fire; he dashed his tremendous antlers from side to side, aiming their every plunge against the life of his fallen enemy.

"He is a dead man!" cried the forester. Louis drew his hunting dirk, and throwing himself at once amidst the terrific combatants, struck it into the throat of the deer. The wounded animal instantly recoiled, carrying away the weapon buried in his flesh. The released huntsman sprung on his legs, and extricating himself from the dogs, which hung more fiercely on their dying prey, staggered towards the adjacent bank. With the assistance of his companions, Louis lost no time in conveying the fainting stranger to a neighbouring lodge, where he soon recovered recollection and his wonted spirits. Perhaps it is needless to say this stranger was Sir Anthony Athelstone! — Louis, being unacquainted with the alteration in his uncle's person, which eight years of intemperance had rendered bloated and coarse, had thus exerted himself from humanity alone. But when Sir Anthony enquired the name of his preserver, and learnt that he owed his life to the intrepidity of Louis de Montemar, the joy of the uncle knew no bounds. He embraced his nephew a thousand times; vowed never to marry, that he might adopt him as his son; nay, he declared, that from this day forward, Louis de Montemar should be the lord both of Bamborough and

its master. Louis was affected by his uncle's gratitude, and self-accusations for the cause of their first estrangement; but respectfully declined resuming a stationary residence at the Castle, though he gratefully promised to make his visits very frequent.

"Providence having thus reconciled the uncle and nephew," continued the Pastor, "how could I presume to refuse my sanction to the renewal of kindred affection?"

The Marquis assented to the force of this argument; and Mr. Athelstone hastened to conclude his narrative, of which the following is a brief summary.

After this general amnesty, Louis continued to visit Sir Anthony every week. And as the watchful guardian heard of no proceedings in the baronet likely to injure the morals of his nephew, the young man was permitted to accompany his uncle the ensuing spring, to revisit the scene of their happy reconciliation. They accordingly went to Scotland. And when they left the Duke of Athol's, Sir Anthony proposed returning home by Loch Rannock, and paying his respects to old Robertson of Struan. Louis was eager to see the veteran and the poet; though, from his advanced age, he expected to find little of the lyre, and less of the trumpet, at his hospitable board.

The journey over, Louis returned to Lindisfarne, enraptured with the country he had seen; but above all enchanted with the chief of Struan, and one of his guests. He seemed intoxicated with some before untasted pleasure, as he discoursed, full of a vague kind of admiration, about the last extraordinary person. Mr. Athelstone asked his name; Louis replied, it was the Duke of Wharton, whom he remembered when a boy; and who, he recollected, had joined his uncle in the folly about the wine. The Duke came to Loch Rannock the day after Sir Anthony's arrival. There was a large party in the house, but Wharton selected Louis as his companion; often deserting the rest, to ride alone with him; and to explore with fearless step, sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, the caverned recesses of the Loch, its fir-clad islands, and mountains of desolate sublimity. During these wide

and stormy rambles, the Duke and Louis visited the house of the laird, and the hovel of the shepherd; pleased alike with the generous cheer of the one, and the frugal hospitality of the other. Wharton could speak Gaelic, a language of which his companion was totally ignorant; but Louis did not the less enjoy the hilarity with which his noble friend pledged their entertainers in claret or whisky: and while a rapid discourse passed in this, to him, unknown tongue, he did not the less sympathise in the pleasure with which *gentle and simple* seemed to regard their animated guest. Men, women, of all ages and degrees, thronged around their illustrious visiter. Sometimes he was serious, sometimes he was gay; but still he spoke in Gaelic; and all changes renewed their acclamations of delight.

When Louis narrated these particulars at the tea-table in Lindisfarne, Mr. Athelstone sighed, and thought that in this month's sojourn at Rannock, his nephew had seen too much, or too little of this extraordinary man. However, he would not risk losing the knowledge of all that had passed, by any immediate observation to damp the ardour of Louis's frank communicativeness. His cousins were eager listeners; and he went rapturously on, describing the Duke as the most fascinating being on earth. So profound in his reflections; so careless in his manner of uttering them; so conscious of his fine person, and yet so gracefully negligent of its effect; so dignified in his carriage, and yet so boyishly fond of mirth, that the mischief he played ever found a ready excuse in the ingenuity of its contrivance, or the frank apology of the laughing perpetrator.

"I would say," exclaimed Louis, "that he is the merriest devil I ever saw, if I could give so poor a name to so rich a wit!"

"Call him Belial," said the Pastor, with a meaning smile, "and you will name him rightly."

Louis laughed; and replied,—"If you will have him a fallen angel, he must be Satan himself: —

> For such high-reaching thought, and port superb,
> Could ne'er be native with the grov'ling crew
> That sunk in raging Phlegethon!"

The Pastor shook his head with another smile; and Louis ran on, talking of the Duke's lofty demeanour, at one season; of its playful condescension, at another: and in the guileless exhilaration of his own heart, described the air with which Wharton drank his Burgundy; how he graced each draught with a brilliant song, adapted by himself to words of Horace or Anacreon in their original language. Then he spoke of the Duke's eloquent criticisms on the classics; of his wit in apt references to them, and to the best writers of France and Italy; and of the sportive manner with which he trifled with the foibles of the company around him; —"seeming," continued Louis, "to stoop from his native height, merely to skim the grosser element, in condescending fellowship with those heavy sons of earth. And the Duke tells me the change is pleasant. It is only burrowing a little amongst the gnomes, to enjoy with keener relish the ethereal joys of the upper regions!"

"Here, my lord," continued the Pastor, in his narrative to the Marquis, "was the snare I had dreaded. When we were alone, I declared my apprehensions to my nephew; but he combated my suspicions with all the pleadings of ingenuous enthusiasm. Louis had never felt more than general kindliness for any of the young men of his acquaintance. For, I am sorry to say, that education is not a principle of these times: and my boy found few to understand any part of his intellectual pursuits, till he met this highly gifted nobleman. Wharton is master of every avenue to the unsuspecting heart. This was the first time that any thing like his own ideas of friendship had come before my nephew; and when they were proffered by so specious a character, it was hardly surprising that even the short intimacy of a month should bewilder his imagination and captivate his heart. When I became aware of the depth of the impression, I took up the subject in the serious light it demanded. I narrated several instances of the Duke's lawless conduct in various relations of life; and showed at once to Louis the deleterious cup he was so tenaciously holding, since it had already induced him to confound right and wrong, by denominating the ruffian violence he had received in his

helpless childhood,'*mere folly and frolic!*' His countenance betrayed there was a powerful contention in his mind. I conjured him to reflect on what I had said; to hearken to my warning voice, as to that of his distant father, or to the last admonitions of his departed mother. Tears burst from his eyes; and kissing my hands, he solemnly pledged himself never again to be a willing resident in the same house with the Duke of Wharton. His Grace had separated from the travelling party, and was gone to Ireland. But that did not prevent me calling on Sir Anthony; and though he did not see the reasonableness of my alarm, he was prevailed on to make me a promise that he would not again be instrumental in bringing his nephew into the society of the Duke.

" From that period until now, this dangerous man has been too much engaged in cajoling and thwarting the British ministry, to think of obscurer triumphs in Northumberland. But now that he is come, and his mischievous spirit has not only persuaded Sir Anthony to break his honour with me, but wrought on Louis to forfeit the verity of his word, I must assume the authority of a guardian; and at once wrest the infatuated boy from the favour of his uncle, and the perverting influence of his friend."

" Venerable Mr. Athelstone!" cried the Marquis, with an emotion of reverence; " this resolution is worthy of a minister of Christ!" But the words were no sooner uttered, than dropping the hand he had emphatically seized, he quitted the room in a disorder which surprised, but did not offend, the meek spirit of the Pastor of Lindisfarne!

CHAPTER III.

Unconscious of the anxieties which had been aroused respecting him at his tranquil home, Louis found himself engaged in scenes he little expected in the dull routine of his uncle's castle.

The first day of his present visit to Bamborough passed according to the usual journal of the whole year: a plenteous dinner, with abundance of wine, and three or four country squires around the table. After the feast, Louis played at backgammon with his uncle; while three of the other guests, with the assistance of Dumby, dozed through half a dozen rubbers of whist. The senses of one had not sufficiently survived the dinner's last potation to be even a silent spectator: he took his station in an easy chair, near some snoring dogs on the hearth-rug, and soon showed audible fellowship with their slumbers. At ten o'clock, the butler announced supper. The whole party started from their chairs; and, rubbing their eyes and hands in the joy of renewed impulse, crowded into the eating-room. Louis, who could say No with as much good-humour as most people say Yes, declined accompanying them, and went to his own apartments, where he passed the moonlight hours in making a drawing of their effect on the opposite tower of Lindisfarne, and the misty ruins of its abbey.

The next morning being ushered in by a fierce equinoctial tempest, the guests of the Castle gazed despairingly at the floods of rain which swept before the furious wind; and when they found it impossible to animate the drowsy hours by lingering out a breakfast already prolonged to loathing, they dashed through the pouring torrents, to kill time amongst horses and grooms, dogs and whippers-in. But even these enjoyments found satiety; and at the first blast of the letter-carrier's horn, the whole party rushed into the house to search his bag, and snatch the welcome newspapers. The sleeper of the night before, who was also high-sheriff of the county, in right of his dignity

mumbled *The Postman* to himself; while Sir Anthony, with many bursts of applause, read *The True Briton* aloud to the rest of the company.

As soon as Louis found the badness of the weather likely to prevent his uncle's guests from taking their usual excursions, he retreated from their noisy pastimes to the large solitary library. There, he knew, he should be as safe from invasion as if he had hid himself in the vaults of the chapel. A few minutes absorbed his whole attention in the black-letter annalists of Great Britain; comparing their details with the chronicles of France, and losing himself in admiration of the Condés and Montmorencies of the one country, and the Talbots and Percys of the other. He dwelt with particular delight on the chivalric characters of Froissart, feeling as if he conversed with them as friends; while the heroes of Cressy and Poictiers divided his heart between the triumph of conquest and the godlike moderation of the victors. While thus engaged, he was at times wrested from his fancied presence in the scenes he read by the smacking of whips, and the halloos of his uncle's guests, as they passed through the hall in their visits to the stables.

"What descendants of the Mowbrays, the Percys, and the Nevilles!" cried Louis to himself. The uproar rose and fell in gusts, like the tempest; and at last, dying away behind the friendly interposition of long passages and distant rooms, he forgot the existence of the noisy rout, and again found himself in the pavilions of heroes.

Towards four o'clock the clouds had exhausted themselves; and a bright sun tempering the chilly freshness of the air, he looked from the library window over the woods and glades of his uncle's park, and felt inclined to steal out unobserved, and take an exhilarating race towards its boundary. The deer were issuing from the covert, glancing their antlers in the beam; and the rooks, speeding home in glad multitudes, were cawing, and wheeling, and flapping their wings, as they hovered over or settled on the tall elms of the ancient avenue. These sounds of grateful nature rather soothed than disturbed the tranquillity of the scene; and Louis lingered at the window, reciprocating the hap-

piness of these creatures,—free, careless, innocent, and full of blameless enjoyment.

In the midst of these musings, a new and an uncommon noise in his uncle's house startled his ear; opening and banging doors along the adjoining gallery; the rumbling of trunks, the calling of servants, and a variety of female voices in constant command. Louis stood amazed. He had not heard that his uncle expected any unusual company, and least of all women; for, owing to the convivial character of Sir Anthony's meetings, none of the county ladies had honoured the Castle with a visit since the departure of Mrs. Coningsby.

In a few minutes Louis heard his name loudly vociferated by Sir Anthony himself. "Louis — Louis de Montemar! Where the devil have you earthed yourself?" and with the boisterous interrogation the baronet burst into the library. His eyes sparkled with jovial intelligence, as he advanced to his nephew. "Come, Louis, my boy! Here is metal more attractive than chess and backgammon, books, or old parchment! Leave this musty place, and you shall see lilies and roses!"

Louis guessed, from these extraordinary transports, that some accident had brought ladies to the Castle; and while he allowed Sir Anthony to hurry him down a back stair to the drawing-room, he tried to learn something of the matter. But the baronet was in too great an ecstasy to speak common sense: he broke into extravagant thanks to the storm, eulogies on bright eyes and blooming complexions; and did not give Louis time to ask another question before he ushered him into the presence of several elegantly dressed women. With manifest pride in the fine person of his nephew, Sir Anthony introduced him to the fair group; and they received him with compliments to the uncle, which, being new to the young man from female lips, deepened to crimson the colour on his glowing complexion.

A little observation convinced him that these were neither his county ladies, nor the ladies of any other county in England. They were handsome; their habits costly; and their deportment something like high fashion, though

it wanted that ineffable grace of delicate reserve which is the indispensable mark of a true English gentlewoman. As he looked on their careless movements and familiar ease, he could not but think how like the last harmonising hue which a skilful painter casts over his picture is the veil of modesty to a lovely woman. In short, he soon gathered from the rapid discourse of these unexpected visiters that they were natives of different countries, and belonging to the stage; which profession, he thought, might necessarily free their manners from the usual restraints of the sex, without in reality impairing their virtue.* Two of the party were of the opera: the one an Italian *primadona*, with a singularly beautiful figure; the other a French dancer, — young, pretty, and full of life; the rest English actresses of various degrees of theatrical distinction.

It was the voices of these ladies' respective maids which had surprised Louis from the gallery; and he now stood contemplating the persons and manners of their mistresses, with the amused curiosity of youth. The pretty French dancer had just enquired whether he spoke her language, and was expressing her delight at being answered in the affirmative, when Sir Anthony (who had quitted the room soon after the introduction of his nephew) re-entered with the Duke of Wharton and the remainder of his guests.

Louis started at sight of the Duke, instantly remembering his promise to his guardian. Wharton wore the same careless, animated air, as when he first fascinated the imagination of his young admirer; and springing directly from the dull mass which surrounded him, seemed to Louis like a sunbeam shot from a heavy cloud. The next moment he found himself in the Duke's arms.

"My dear De Montemar! This is unexpected pleasure! I thought only of refreshing my horses, little dreaming your uncle had provided this feast for their master!"

* The reader is requested to call to mind, that this is the description of the theatrical profession at that period of its history in this country, when the plays of Farquhar, and others of the same taste, occupied the stage; and were performed by persons who too nearly resembled in reality the characters they represented. With Garrick and revived Shakspeare, morals and propriety were restored: — and at the head of our present British actresses, who possess the "grace of delicate reserve, the indispensable mark of a true English gentlewoman," no one can fail to respect Mrs. Siddons.

Louis trembled and was silent. He wished his guardian had not exacted the promise, which, even at this moment, whispered he must not hearken to the captivating Wharton, but tear himself away. Louis did not reply; for he felt unable to say, (what he was determined to do,) that he must instantly return to Lindisfarne.

The Duke took his arm, and drew him to a distant part of the room. "De Montemar, I could sacrifice a hecatomb of my best Cumberland steers, for this blessed meeting! I have not seen any thing so after my own heart, since we parted; and yet I have been lamp in hand, day and night, in search of one of your stamp. When all are gone to bed, meet me to-night in the old library. I have that to say to you, I would not have even a listening spider whisper to some of this herd."

"Not even myself must hear it!" replied Louis, making a strong effort to declare at once his intention; "Your Grace must pardon me, but I am this instant leaving the Castle."

"Impossible!" cried the Duke, "you would not go for the wealth of Mexico, if you knew the matter I have to communicate."

"No temptation must detain me!" replied Louis, with a smile that spoke of sacrifice; "I am under an engagement that cannot be broken."

"That countenance," returned Wharton, laughing, "tells a different story! — You know the old proverb! *Where there is a will, &c.;* and I cannot doubt yours, since we pledged ourselves heart to heart on the bonnie braes of Glen Rannock!"

The Duke paused, and Louis looked confused. He began to think his venerable uncle more than severe against this resistless pleader. Wharton resumed. "Come, De Montemar! I am here accidentally, and only for a short time; let me write *man* upon that blushing brow! The ink shall not be Squire Anthony's lees, nor the seal Saint Cuthbert's tonsure. My signet is of other impression."

"Your signet is too true a one," returned Louis, "to obliterate a *word of honour!* and I have given mine to my uncle of Lindisfarne to——," he hesitated. Could he tell

the noble Wharton, that he had solemnly promised never to remain willingly under the same roof with him?

Wharton observed the agitated embarrassment of his too well-inclined friend.

"To what," said he, "have you pledged yourself to Mr. Athelstone? — To return to him to-night? But the promise was given under ordinary expectations. I know your uncle does not like the usual orgies of Sir Anthony. But as neither you, nor the good old gentleman, could guess that my happy stars would bring me to Bamborough to-day, you must allow me, as a *true knight* and *grand-master* in the *courts of honour,* to pronounce,— that change of circumstances releases you from your engagement, and him from the necessity of demanding its fulfilment!"

Louis's heightening colour overspread his face, as the Duke concluded; but collecting all his powers of self-denial, "My lord," said he, "you are very good; but I must go! The tide now serves, and delay ——"

Wharton released his arm with an air of pique. The resolution of Louis to depart, and without assigning his guardian's reason for insisting on his return, was enough for the ready apprehension of the Duke. He at once comprehended that Mr. Athelstone foresaw a change in his nephew's moral and political principles, should he be permitted to cultivate an intimacy, which, it was evident, was the secret wish of that nephew's heart. The Duke saw the struggle between inclination and duty. He saw that persuasions to stay, by causing Louis to summon more of his moral strength to oppose his own desire to remain, only ensured his departure; therefore the moment Wharton perceived the real position of the enemy, he made a *ruse de guerre,* and drew off.

"I shall not withstand your inclination, Mr. de Montemar," said he, as he turned away with assumed coldness. The words smote on the heart of Louis. Sir Anthony, who had caught their unusual tone, looked towards the Duke and his nephew. He saw the former walk with a grave demeanour towards a window, and the latter gaze after him with an agitated countenance. The baronet

approached Louis, and in a whisper asked what had happened.

"I must obey my uncle's command to return to Lindisfarne."

This reply recalled to Sir Anthony his own promise to the same effect. He reddened angrily: "and you have told the Duke, Mr. Athelstone's monkish antipathy to his gaiety and good humour?"

"No, dear sir, but I have told him I must go; that I am pledged to go. And though he injures me by supposing I obey without reluctance, yet I hold my uncle's command too sacred, to allow me even to linger."

With a hurrying step he was moving towards the door, when the baronet made one angry stride, and stretching forth his athletic arm, grasped his nephew's; and, with an enraged countenance, drawing him into an ante-room, waved his other hand to the Duke to follow. Wharton was too good a general to comply immediately; and Sir Anthony, as soon as he could speak without the observation of strangers, burst into a loud and violent invective on his uncle's unjustifiable prejudices against the Duke.

"What can he charge him with?" cried the baronet. — "That he is young? The fitter to be your companion! —That he is gay? If a man be not gay in his youth, when is he to be so?—That he is married, and does not live with his wife? What man of spirit would keep any terms with a woman, who wheedled him into wedlock before he was out of his teens? — That he is fond of wine? His thirst does not make you drink! — That he is liked by women, and not ungrateful to their kindnesses? Why, Louis, your old uncle had best shut you up at once with the dead bones in the abbey vaults! Then he calls him a rebel to his King? What of that? If the King himself does not fear him, but lets him go at large amongst his subjects; why should the Pastor of Lindisfarne take more care for his Majesty, than his Majesty thinks proper to take for himself! I tell you, Louis, the cloven foot is under the surplice. It is resentment of an old affront, that excites all this animosity in the mind of Mr. Athelstone."

There was much in this speech, and more in the manner of it, that offended the best feelings of Louis. "Sir," said he, "I thank you for having recalled to me my uncle's arguments on this subject. He may be mistaken as to the extent of the facts; but till he is so far convinced of his error, as to release me from the promise grounded on them, I must consider myself bound to abide by it."

The baronet's face now became purple. "Louis! am not I your uncle, as well as this domineering priest? I am your mother's brother; and from her I have rights he cannot claim. You respect his commands! By what authority do you disobey mine? You are my nephew; and, on your peril, stir not from this house, till it is my pleasure to let you go."

He turned with a look of defiance, to leave the room; but the voice of Louis arrested him. "Sir Anthony," cried he, "when you command me as becomes my mother's brother, I have ever been eager to show you obedience; but no authority on earth shall compel me to stay, where I am to hear words of disrespect coupled with the name of my most revered guardian."

"We will look to that!" said the baronet fiercely; and opening an opposite door he disappeared, banging it furiously after him. The Duke entered at the same instant, by the one from the drawing-room. He stood for a moment, observing the countenance of Louis; then, approaching him with his usual frank air: "De Montemar," said he, "my ear caught something of what has just passed between you and your uncle: and I have heard enough to make me ashamed of the fool's part I played just now, when I turned from you like a jealous girl!"

Wharton laid his hand on the arm of Louis, and with a gay smile, which the affectionate seriousness in his eyes rendered enchanting, he gently added, "but friendship being the sister of love, we may forgive her sharing a little of her brother's infirmities."

Louis could not guess how much of the recent offensive discussion had been overheard by its subject; but he was glad to be cleared in the mind of the Duke from the implied charge of quitting him capriciously. "Chance,"

said he, "has communicated to your Grace, what I could never have brought myself to utter."

"And therefore," returned the Duke, "I suppose you leave me to guess the good Pastor's reason for excluding me from his fold? I see it in the sin of my youth. You have forgotten it; but, in my beardless days, I offended Mr. Athelstone in a way that deserved a cat-o'-nine tails. Had he laid his horsewhip over my shoulders at that time, it would have been wholesome chastisement: but this interdict ——"

"It is not for that!" exclaimed Louis; "but could my guardian know the generous character he so misjudges, I feel he would court that friendship for me, he now so fearfully deprecates."

The Duke shook his head. "Thanks, dear Montemar, for that profession of your faith! But when prejudice gets possession of an old head, neither argument nor *auto da fé* can dislodge the evil spirit."

"Indeed," cried Louis, "my excellent uncle is not fuller of years than of candour! It is not one prejudice, but reports — slanders ——"

"Ay," interrupted the Duke, "Dan Bacon warns us that *Envy, like the sun, beats hottest on the highest grounds!* But I could have spared this proof of my merit. — De Montemar," added he, in a graver and more earnest tone, "shall I tell you, that you, — with that guileless heart, that ingenuous soul, that maiden reputation, — will one day be *reported! slandered!* made a pest, as I am, to be avoided!"

Clouds collected over the Duke's brow as he proceeded. He walked a few paces towards the opposite side of the room, and then turned round with his usual bright countenance. — "De Montemar, my life has been a comet's track; therefore may astonish and alarm. It is not given to every man to know the point direct, of that eccentric course. I tell you — it is the sun!"

Louis's heart glowed, as the Duke thus animatedly delivered himself. "Oh, my lord," cried he, "why are you thus misapprehended? Or rather, why will that

noble spirit give any licence to slander, by stooping to such associates as ——" He paused.

"We will not name them!" replied Wharton, laughing; "but such things are my toys, or my tools. Did men of our sort keep only with our likes, we should prove but useless animals. The world is a commonwealth, where every man must take fellowship with poor dependent human nature; or at once claim kindred with the gods, and post it to the moon!"

The Castle bell rang for dinner; and with its last peal, Sir Anthony presented himself at the drawing-room door. — He came haughtily forward. "My Lord Duke, the ladies await your hand to lead them down stairs. Louis, you are come to your senses, I see, and will follow his Grace."

The manner with which the baronet said this, showed he rather expected to intimidate his nephew into compliance, than really thought he had made up his mind to obey. Louis answered with firmness, "I cannot, sir, transgress what I know to be my duty."

Sir Anthony's eyes flashed fire; "That is to say," cried he, "you know it is your duty to obey me! — and you will obey me! — or abide by the consequence." — "Nay, Athelstone," interrupted the Duke, "this is shot and bounce with a vengeance! What man, with the spirt of a weazel, but would grub through your very towers, to show you he despised such threatenings? Open your gates to the uncontrolled egress and regress of your nephew, or my free pinions will spurn them in a moment!" — "I am no jailor, Duke Wharton," replied the angry baronet, "but that boy should know his uncle is not to be insulted with impunity He presumes on my avowed affection for him, to affront my company before my face; and then mocks me with an apology still more galling, by declaring that he must prefer the caprices of a selfish old priest, to all the gratitude he owes an uncle who indulges his every wish, and has already made him heir to this castle and its revenues!"

"Athelstone! Athelstone!" exclaimed the Duke, "am I to tell you *that boy* is one exception to Walpole's theory of mankind? Open your gates, and let him go."

Sir Anthony looked from the smiling rebuke of the Duke, to the perturbed countenance of his nephew. "Louis," said he, in a more temperate tone, "you know how this has been wrung from you. Are there no terms to be kept with my affection for you? No middle way between outraging all respect to me, and breaking your extorted promise to this lord of penance?"

"How can I listen, sir, to such epithets attached to the idea of the most venerable of men?"

"He may indulge the boy's play!" cried the Duke: "ill names stick only to such sorry fellows as I am."

"Oh, sir," rejoined Louis, "I have only to represent to my guardian the candour with which the Duke of Wharton has just treated his unhappy prejudice, and I am sure he will instantly permit me to return to the Castle."

"Then you persist in going to-night?"

"Now, sir," replied Louis, "the tide serves: and if I delay, I must remain till morning."

Sir Anthony walked the room in great agitation. Wharton looked at his young friend with a persuasion in his eyes, to which he did not give words; and their beset object, unable to give a favourable answer to such pleading, bent his to the ground.

At last the Baronet stopped opposite to him. "Louis, you are not a generous adversary. You deal hardly with the heart, you so well know is all your own. And there you stand, so silent, so stern, to compel your uncle, — the man whose life you saved, — to beg your pardon for his violence; and to entreat you, even with prayers, not to leave his roof in anger!" Sir Anthony caught his nephew's hand, and sobbed out the last words. Louis threw himself on his uncle's neck; and quite overcome, hardly articulated, "I will stay to-night, but to-morrow morning — Oh, my dear sir, do not urge me to forfeit my own esteem!"

Wharton took the arm of the baronet, who covered his face with his handkerchief; and while he obeyed the impulse which drew him away through the gallery-door, the Duke bent back, and whispered to Louis, "You will follow us to the dining-room?" Louis bowed his head in

troubled silence; and the baronet, with his friend, turned down the gallery.

"A few hours yielded to my uncle's feelings," said Louis to himself, "will, I trust, make no essential difference in the performance of my word to Mr. Athelstone. And, indeed, I am true to its spirit, for I stay not willingly. And yet, were it not for that pledged word, how great would be my delight in the society of this amiable, this ingenuous, this generous Wharton!"

When Louis joined the party at dinner, the flush of his hardly subsided agitation was still on his cheek; but his manner was composed, and his looks cheerful. The company were all seated; and the place left for him was between the lively Frenchwoman and Earl Warwick. The ruddy face of the baronet was burnished with smiles from his recent victory, which he hoped was a final one over the future influence of the Pastor with his nephew; and the pride of triumph did not a little inspirit the vivacity with which he did the honours of his table.

For a little time the Duke appeared thoughtful; and frequently turned his eyes upon Louis, rather as if he were the object of his thoughts, than of his sight: but the actress who sat next him, rallying him once or twice on his portentous abstraction, he suddenly shook off a mood so little according with the company; and replying with answering badinage, warned her dramatic majesty to beware of forcing Eneas from his cloud. The lady dared his threats; and a dialogue of wit and playful gallantry passed between the two, which delighted the sportive fancy of Louis, and set the grosser spirits of the party in a roar.

In the first pause of this noisy mirth, the black-eyed Italian challenged the Duke to bear his part with her in a new duetto of Apostola Zero. It was from the opera of Sappho and Phaon, and described the last interview of the lovers in the Lesbian shades. Louis loved music. He always listened with pleasure to his cousins, chanting their border legends, or giving utterance to the sweeter ballads of Scotland; but he had never heard Italian singing until now; and he was so wrapt in ecstasy, that, lost to the objects around him, he sat during the performance

with his hands clasped, and his eyes rivetted alternately on the Duke and on the Signora, as they severally took up the thrilling melody; but when their voices mingled at the close with all the harmonious interchange of height and depth, faultless execution, and exquisite pathos, the heart of Louis seemed dissolving within him; and as the last notes trembled and died on his ear he leaned back in his chair and covered his face with his hand.

The momentary pause that followed, and which his throbbing heart would fain have prolonged, was rudely broken by an universal clapping of hands, and cries of bravo! By a side glance, Wharton had observed Louis's attention to the singing; and now seeing the disgust with which he pushed his chair back from the discordant uproar, he bent behind the Frenchwoman, and tapping his young friend on the shoulder, whispered —

> "This universal shout, and shrill applause,
> Seem to the outraged ear of listening silence,
> Strange as the hiss of hell, whose sound perverse
> Went forth to hail its sovereign's victory."

As the Duke spoke, the cadence with which he repeated the lines recalled the strains which yet vibrated on the entranced sense of his auditor; and Louis, turning his eyes on him who had charmed him out of himself, expressed in broken but energetic language the delight he had felt, the wonder that such powers could belong to the human voice: "I have heard fine singing before," said he; "but this is more than singing! It is the voice of the soul — or, shall I say, it is the *amabile murmur* — the very ineffable language which Love breathed into the heart of Psyché?"

"Say what you please, my own De Montemar!" cried the Duke, his face radiant with animation; "you have the soul I want! — meet me to-night in the old library."

His friend the actress heard the last words; and gaily protesting against any appointment which tended to break up the present festivity, the rest of the ladies rapturously seconded her motion to close the night with a dance. Sir Anthony rubbed his hands with glee at the proposal: and when the ladies soon after ascended to their tea-table, he ordered the band, which usually travelled in the retinue of

the magnificent Duke, to take its station in the great drawing room.

The healths of the fair dames being drank on their departure, the native topics of the chase, races, justice meetings, and county politics, gradually gave way before the ascendancy of high spirits in men of wit and genius. Louis had insensibly drank more wine at dinner than was his custom. Its fumes, and the entrancing power of the music, united with the charms of the Duke's ever-varying discourse, had thrown his faculties into a kind of enchanted mist, where all that is pleasurable played on the surface, all that was alarming remained beneath the cloud.

At a late hour they joined the ladies, who were seated at ombre and piquet; but the moment the men appeared, the tables were pushed aside; and the leading actress, rising from her chair, invited the Duke to a minuet. He presented her his hand, while the violins obeyed the nod of his head; and then moved through the elegant evolvements of the dance with a grace the more charming from the air of gay indifference with which he approached and retreated from her gliding steps.

The pretty Frenchwoman showed the agile varieties of her art, in a *pas seul,* which filled the northern squires with wonder, and a satisfaction more level to their apprehensions than had been the science of the fair Italian. Louis stood, leaning over the back of a chair, smiling, and nodding his approbation, to the exhilarating time of the music. As soon as Ma'm'selle Violante had made her concluding whirl in the air, she tripped lightly forward, and gaily demanded his hand for the country-dance. He bowed delightedly; and obeyed her volant motion as she bounded with him down the room to join Wharton, and his fair partner, at the head of the set. The ball became general, and the jouissance so intoxicating, that the whole scene swam in delicious, delirious pleasure, with the newly initiated sons of rough Northumberland.

When the party broke up as the sun rose, and Louis retired to his chamber, he hardly knew himself to be the same being who had left it the morning before. In that very chamber, four centuries ago, the gay and profligate

Piers Gaveston was lodged, a prisoner! From that very chamber had Louis issued only the preceding day, censuring in his mind the vices of its ancient possessor; and marvelling how any temptation addressed to the mere senses of man could betray him to acts dishonouring his nature.

With a whirling brain, he now threw himself upon his pillow. The music still sounded in his ears; he yet wound with airy step through the mazes of the dance; the familiar pressure of the laughing Violante was still warm on his hand; and he yet thrilled under the soft glances of the fair Italian. Till that day, he had never seen women mingle so unreservedly in the festive pleasures of men; he had never thought it possible that any behaviour freer than what he saw in the usual behaviour of the sex could excite other emotions in him than those of dislike and disgust. He had admired the magic painting of Homer, Tasso, and Spenser, in their Circé, Armida, and Adessa; and he had trembled for the constancy of their respective heroes before the allurements of such sorcery: but he never expected to find similar trials in real life. He believed the fair tempters in romance were indebted for the beautiful mask with which they concealed their mental deformity entirely to the spells of the poet's genius. Vice, in living woman, must be as odious in outward shape, as loathsome within.

In short, in meditation, nothing is beautiful without goodness. The unbiassed heart, speculating upon these subjects, never unites admiration with any thing foreign to that character; and mistaking taste for principle, when it comes to the proof, too often substitutes the approbation of virtue for virtue itself. The discourses of Mrs. Coningsby fostered in the mind of her nephew this natural idea of the indivisibility of goodness and beauty. She described the empire of vice to be absolute when it takes possession of a woman; and that its immediate effects were to obliterate every feminine grace, and transmute her at once into a monster of sin and disgustfulness. Believing this, Louis was not prepared for the scene he had just witnessed. The pit, he expected to behold yawning like the mouth of hell,

and so warning him from its approach, he saw overlaid with a verdure brighter than all around: no wonder, then, his unwary feet trod the tempting spot, and found it treacherous.

CHAPTER IV.

He slept, and the scene was renewed with a thousand strange varieties. Imagination recalled in fantastic vision all that he had read of enchanted pleasures, or of descending goddesses mingling their immortal nature with favoured man. He now lost his own identity, in the person of Rogero, slumbering away life in the arms of Alcina; and then became the indignant Rinaldo cutting his way through the entangling thickets of Armida's wood. He awoke, heated and unrefreshed. His heart panted with his imaginary contest; and his fevered temples beat to agony as he sprang from his disordered bed, and throwing open the window towards the breezes of the sea, inhaled their cooling freshness. His tremulous frame gradually recovered a braced tone; and wrapping his dressing-gown around him, he stood gazing on the opposite rocks of Lindisfarne, with feelings as new to him as had been the spectacle of the night before. He blushed as he thought of rejoining the dear inhabitants of that sacred spot. A strange faintness seized on his heart —a sense of shame!

"For what," cried he, "what have I done, to cause this self-accusation? I have not broken my word with my uncle; I did not consent, willingly, to stay till this morning; I made the sacrifice to Sir Anthony's feelings."

Thus far his conscience acquitted him; and he breathed more freely; but still he could not say, My heart is lightened of its load.

"I feel myself polluted!" cried he; "I know not what was said and done last night to change me thus; but the wine I drank, and those women's looks and words, and

my very dreams, seem to have contaminated my soul and body! Oh, holy Lindisfarne! My uncle, my sweet cousins, why did I ever leave your innocent presence!"

With this agonized invocation, he hastened to dress himself, that he might fly from the Castle and all its present mischiefs.

Violante had informed him the preceding night how so strange a party came together; and why they had intruded themselves on the hospitality of his uncle. She described, with satirical pleasantry, a week's visit, which she and her Thespian sisters had been making to a noble *amateur* in Teviotdale. Lord Warwick was there; and soon after Duke Wharton arrived in his way from the Highlands. At the time of his coming, the whole company were on the eve of departure; but, as he was moving southward, and they were to travel in the same direction, he complied with Warwick's entreaties, and joined the party. The storm caught them on the moors; and the women being frightened, it was necessary to seek some place of shelter. A minute's thought brought to Wharton's recollection that Bamborough was in the neighbourhood; and, without hesitation he ordered the horses' heads of half a dozen carriages to be turned towards the mansion of the convivial baronet.

As Louis ran over these circumstances in his mind, and recalled the lively indifference with which the Duke seemed to dally with all this youth and beauty, and female witchery; turning from one to the other with the gay caprice of the frolic butterfly which flies from flower to flower, hovering and touching, and then to flight again. — "Happy Wharton!" exclaimed he; "yours is indeed the spirit which *skims the earth, and does not soil its wings!* while mine has only to approach its surface, and be made but too sensible that dust I am, and would to dust return!"

In this mood he descended to the court-yard; and ordered a boat to be ready for Lindisfarne as soon as the tide should serve. But in returning along the terrace from the Castle cove he encountered the object of his meditation and his envy; the object which still made his heart linger about the spot he was so determined to leave.

"Ha, De Montemar!" cried the Duke, "Well met; before the constellations of last night arise to put yon saucy, upbraiding sun out of countenance! But how long have you been making morn hideous with those rueful looks? Why you are a different man from the ethereal son of joy who moved amongst us last night like Ganymede dispensing the draughts of Olympus!"

Louis saw in this gay hyperbole only the spectre of a folly he was ashamed of. His disturbed countenance spoke what was passing in his mind; but trying to smile, "Indeed, my lord," said he, "you are right to laugh at my inebriated senses. I assure you, I despise myself."

"For what, De Montemar? That you have eyes and ears, and are a man?"

Louis coloured; "Perhaps that I own too much of his worst part!"

"How?"

He did not answer, but quickened his steps. The Duke looked archly in his face, and laughed: "I will answer myself. That fond little devil Violante has driven Saint Cuthbert out of your head; and you would exercise the strange possession at the shrine of the holy woman-hater!"

Louis started at this insinuation: it offended him, though so lightly uttered. Perplexed, and every way displeased with himself and his companions, he however tried to answer composedly.—"Your Grace is mistaken. I carry away with me no image from last night's revelry, but that of my own weakness. I despise the facility with which I fell in with the fashion of the hour to drink wine till I unsettled my reason; and I detest myself for feeling that I existed from that time until I awoke this morning, without other consciousness than that which my besotted senses afforded." He stopped; then raising his before bent head, smiled scornfully, and added, "But the garden of the Hourii is not my paradise."

Wharton gazed on him a moment in silence. Louis did not perceive the astonishment he had created, but walked on with a steadier pace and a calmer countenance.

"Well," thought the Duke, as he put his arm through that of his companion; "Anteus rose the stronger, after

he had touched his mother earth! But Hercules tried another throw!"

"De Montemar," said he, "let us leave these unlucky Hourii to their slumbers, and resume the subject which they charmed to silence last night. An eve's dropper might be dangerous!—yon wood looks sure, and silent."

Louis glanced at his watch; and seeing that the tide would not be at full for yet half an hour, he allowed Wharton to turn his steps towards the thickets of the park.

"Louis de Montemar, I am going to unlock my heart to you,—I am going to put my life into your hands."

"My lord?"

"I am.—But I have weighed the trust. You do not know yourself. I do; and,—laugh at me for a coxcomb, if you please! But I affirm, your character and mine are composed of the same materials. I recognise a brother soul in your breast. My course I have explained before; but the same will be your pursuits, the same your destiny."

"Oh, my lord," cried Louis, "if emulation could transform its subject, you might not prophesy in vain! But I will not think you mock me! Your own luminous nature surrounds you; and seeing through that, you fancy objects bright, which only reflect your beams."

"Prettily said, my ingenious friend," answered the Duke; "but my position shall be proved by fact. Let us compare circumstances. You are not yet of age?"

"Just twenty."

"Young enough to be catechised! Will you answer me fairly?"

Louis smiled,—"As my godfathers did promise and vow?"

"Have you ambition?"

"As much as ever budded the brow of young Ammon."

"Have you enterprise?"

"Else my ambition had never been avowed."

"Can you dare the world's obloquy?"

"In a noble cause I would risk its hisses."

The Duke caught him in his arms.

"By all the host of heaven, yours is a spirit with which mine shall have no disguises!—You say, I am *reported*,

slandered! I know it: the fool's arrows are in the eagle's wing; but what of that? The bird is Jove's, and they cannot stick the vital part! On your own principle, I laugh at the hooting mob. Mark my progress, De Montemar: you see in Warwick the worthy representative of nine tenths of our nobility; distinguished from the crowd, by nothing but their titles and insignificance. I would sooner hang like Absalom on a tree, than so pass away amongst the herd of my cotemporaries!

"My father did not understand my character; and when he died, bequeathed me doctors of law, and professors of humanity, to give me examples of word and deed. They tried to crush the spirit they could not bend; and then, in very impotence, pronounced me *an unmanageable colt!*

"Taking the hint, this bold Bucephalus, they could not tame, broke from his bridle; and, wonder not, he scoured the field in very wantonness of liberty!"

Louis joined in the gay laugh of his friend, and Wharton proceeded.

"Hardly nineteen, I spurned the tedious tutelage of schools and colleges, and threw myself at once into the university of nature; the wide and populous world. I went to the Continent. But not to seek *a garden of the Houri!* At Geneva, I became the friend of philosophers; at Paris, the companion of wits; in Italy, the counsellor of princes. —Do you mark me?"

"I do, with wonder and admiration."

"What I then dared to advise, I am now come to execute." He paused a moment; "De Montemar, there are objects at Avignon of more interest than Vaucluse!" — Again he paused, and looked at Louis.

"I do not understand you, my lord."

"Expound my riddle? Your fate shall not be that of Œdipus."

"I should deserve no better, were I to waste the time in guesses; when I may profit by its exposition from yourself."

The Duke did not like this dulness, but he proceeded:

" De Montemar, what is your opinion of Montrose? He whom Cromwell sent to the scaffold, for attachment to his sovereign?"

Louis eagerly answered, " I consider his gallant patriotism, as hardly second to that of his immortal countryman, William Wallace; and could almost envy him his feelings, when the executioner bound to his brave neck the catalogue of his victories over the regicides. What a consciousness of true greatness must have been in the smile with which he welcomed this intended badge of disgrace, and called it a brighter testimony to his honour, than the star of Saint George, which they tore from his bosom!"

" Well answered, my trusty catechumen!" cried the Duke; " now for another question, and thou shalt have thy diploma.—In what respect do you hold honest George Monk, who deserted the blockhead chief of the Roundheads, and recalled the son of their murdered king to the throne of his ancestors?"

" Monk does not fire my heart, like Montrose," replied Louis; " I love direct paths; and *honest* George was most inclined to crooked ones. However, he walked straight at last, and for that I honour him."

" Then you love the Stuarts?"

" Their line is of mingled yarn! I revere, love, blame, pity them."

" De Montemar, you must know the Chevalier de Saint George!"

" How?—where?"

" At Avignon."

Louis met the powerful glance of Wharton. His ears tingled, and the words of his guardian seemed ringing there;—*the wily Duke will teach you to be a traitor!*—Hot and cold damps burst from every pore of his body.

" You do not answer me, De Montemar? I see you are discomposed. You are agitated:—and it is a cause to stir up every vital spring in the breast of free-born man!"

Louis could not affect to misunderstand him. He recollected himself.—" Duke Wharton," said he, " you did not always think, as this would tend!"

"Always! Remember Montrose! Men, change; principles, never. There is but one palladium for a British heart: the British Constitution!"

"My heart feels it," cried Louis; "therefore, to maintain its rescued liberty——"

"You would even cut my throat!" exclaimed his antagonist, smilingly, interrupting him; "and, of a truth, Liberty is a fine rallying word. But a man ought to know its import."

Louis had never considered it but in its splendid abstract, better fitted for angels than for men; and glad to change the original subject of discussion, with an answering smile, he replied, — "It is, to be a free agent."

"Granted! — and, according to the ancient and modern Gracchi, every man as his humour prompts! You admire the conclusion?"

Louis shook his head: — "Not so! for when men understand liberty, public virtue; and love their country——"

"Casualties, my friend," cried Wharton; "when the principle is to do all, a man has will to do! and *that*, England has found, before now, is liberty with a vengeance."

"There may be extravagance in all things," returned Louis; "but where do you ground liberty, if not in the freedom of the human will?"

"In its restraint," replied Wharton, who comprehended sufficient of his young friend's dispositions, to discern the face that would give force to his argument. "In the wisdom of ages; converged to a point of law, which leaves man no power to injure his neighbour with impunity: a certain ancient book, of the best authority, tells us, this is perfect liberty. Study as widely, and as deeply, as you may, you will not find political rights a surer foundation!"

"I own it," rejoined Louis; "and your argument defends the side I ought to reverence."

"I hope it may!" replied Wharton, firmly grasping Louis's hand, while he struck his own heart with the hilt of his sword; "let the maintainer be our lawful king;— or my blood is ready to follow the course of Kenmuir and Derwent water!"—

Louis had been taken unawares; and now, fully perceiving his companion's drift, was incapable of reply. He verified the remark, that no history is so little understood by young persons as that of their country, near their own times. The false lights of party have not then sufficiently subsided, to allow the regular historian a clear view of events; and the prejudiced memoirs of the day are too numerous and contradictory to be put into the hands of youth, without making a waste of that time which ought to be devoted to building up a future judgment on the well-founded basis of the history of past ages. The subject proposed by the Duke was therefore new to the reflections of Louis. He had never questioned, nor confirmed his loyalty to the House of Hanover, by considering the change of succession with any reference to its merits, or his own peculiar opinions. He had never seen any thing at the parsonage but peaceful submission to authority, *not for wrath, but conscience' sake.* At the castle, another sentiment was often agitated; but the speakers were usually violent, unreflecting characters, whose praise or blame he knew to be equally worthless. However, he could not deny to himself, that he had shrunk in horror from recitals of what passed ten years ago, with regard to the rebel lords; and he also could not forget, that his uncle of Lindisfarne has often lamented the severe policy of their execution, and wished the State had thought it possible to unite mercy with judgment. "Had his Majesty pardoned them," said Mr. Athelstone, "rebellion would have perished in their stead; for the honour of a British heart is stronger than death."

Much of this rushed, confusedly, to the recollection of Louis during his conference with the Duke. His partialities, romantic associations, and generous enthusiasm, were all on the side of the suffering party; but his habits of submission had been directed by his best friends to the reigning family. He felt his own indecision; he saw the Duke's advantage; and repeating to himself his uncle's warning, again determined not to linger another hour near the dangerous contagion.

Wharton's observing eye perceived fluctuation in the

mind of Louis: and as there *was* fluctuation on so portentous a subject, he boded a favourable issue to his argument, could he detain his intended proselyte a little longer from the island. Should Louis return thither before his faith were actually pledged to the Stuart cause, it could not be doubted he would impart his scruples to the Pastor; and that true minister of the Reformation would keep him firm to the House of Hanover. Full of this apprehension, and aware that Louis must soon be summoned to the boat, unless prevented by some unsuspected manœuvre, Wharton was not sorry when he saw Sir Anthony, and several of the party, advancing fast upon them from the house. The tongues of the ladies proclaimed their vicinity.

"Gird your loins, my friend!" cried the Duke, resuming his usual merriment; and laughing at the stern air with which Louis turned to their voices:—"Delilah and the Philistines are upon you?"

"And if every hair on my head were a rope by which they held me," replied Louis, "I would escape them!" As he spoke, he suddenly turned on his heel, and darted down a vista of firs towards the sea-beach. Wharton did no more than wave his hand to the light-footed Violante. She shot by a cross path through the shrubbery, and at a curve in the avenue met the flying object of her pursuit, with a force that struck her to the ground. The rest of the party were soon hastened forward, by the cries of Louis for help; who, on raising her, and finding her insensible, thought she was killed by the violence of the shock.

But the ladies found the case not so desperate; and, by the help of essences, soon restored the fair sufferer to animation.

Sir Anthony proposed her being taken into the house. But on attempting to rise, she sank back, almost fainting, a second time, from the excessive pain of a sprained ancle, Wharton called for a sofa, which being brought, the invalid was carefully placed on its cushions; and the gentlemen present insisted on being its bearers into the Castle. As the sofa was raised from the ground, Violante turned

to Louis with a languid smile; "You will not leave me, Mr. de Montemar?" said she, and stretched her hand to him, with a look more persuasive than her words.

To disappoint the wish, and expectation, these words and action implied, he found impossible. He had no suspicion that she was running to intercept him when the accident happened; and now, turning with a respectful bow to her summons, he silently followed the sofa into the breakfast-room. Her gallant bearers placed it by the fire, at a small distance from the table.

Time rolled away, and he heard no tidings of the boat. It was an unusual inattention in his uncle's servants, who always vied with each other who should be most prompt in obeying every wish of their beloved Mr. de Montemar. But Wharton had contrived to have the little vessel countermanded, without his appearing in the orders. Ignorant of this, Louis seized the first moment the invalid addressed herself to another person, and, in a low voice, asked the butler whether the boat were in waiting. The man, not aware of the commands which had been given one way or the other, simply answered, the tide had been at ebb two hours. Louis started from his chair. Violante, observing a sudden flush in his countenance, with this disordered action, softly enquired the cause. It was no sooner explained, than, casting on him a reproachful look, she burst into tears, and turned her head silently away. Louis felt himself in a very embarrassing situation; and almost unconsciously resuming his seat beside her, drew a vexatious sigh as he said to himself,—"I am caught and coiled in spite of myself!"

Violante mistook the meaning of this sigh; and withdrawing her hand from her eyes, gave him a glance of tender gratitude. Though apparently engaged in gay badinage with the other ladies, Wharton did not lose an expression of his friend's countenance, as the alluring Frenchwoman continued to converse with him in a tone of mingled raillery and softness. "If he stand this," thought the Duke, "he has even more ice, of a certain kind, in his composition, than he has forced me this morning to believe!"

Sir Anthony entered from the hall, calling aloud, "Who rides this morning? I have ordered horses round to the court."

"De Montemar, what are you for?" said the Duke. "I see victory is in the hands where I would always have it; but as the ladies may not wish to have their captive at their feet all day, are you inclined for a steeple hunt this morning?"

Louis eagerly embraced the proposal. Violante coloured; touched his arm; and, pressing it with strong emotion, whispered something in his ear. Wharton laughed, and turned on his heel. Louis believed himself turned idiot. Abandoned by his usual presence of mind, he knew not what to say, or how to look; though he felt perfectly resolved not to sleep another night in the Castle, while it contained its present extraordinary inmates. The seductive scenes of the preceding night seemed disenchanted before him; men and women,—all were divested of their magic garments, excepting Wharton, and he still wore the vesture of light.

"Why will he mingle his noble nature with creatures base as these?" again he said to himself. "Are they his toys? his tools? — To what purpose?"

He was gazing on the Duke as these thoughts occurred to him. Wharton caught the look, — its expression went through him; but waving his hand, as if that would glance it aside, he shook his head sportively, and exclaimed, "You want me to pledge my guarantee to Violante, that there shall be no more desertions! Believe me, pretty one! For the bright Pleiades are not more inseparable above, than are your swain and humble servant below.

"—— We rise and set together."

He spoke the last sentence without any reference to the subject which had at first suggested the idea; and having in the utterance as much forgotten Violante as though she had never existed, he put his arm through Louis's, and turned with him out of the room.

"De Montemar," said he, as they crossed the hall, "the conversation which was interrupted this morning must be

finished. I have put a book into your hand which must be sealed this evening, else the vagrant leaves may follow the sybil's trick; and I know nothing of the gatherer till that doughty lictor, Jack Ketch, makes me his bow on Tower Hill."

"Surely, my lord, you cannot doubt my honour, if you could my heart?"

"I will doubt every thing, till that heart is laid open to me. I vowed to have no disguises with you. Repay me in kind. Heart for heart, De Montemar, is the only true exchange!"

Louis did not immediately answer; for he felt, what he would not fairly acknowledge to himself, that a mist did sometimes appear to rise over this professed frankness of the Duke, which often made it uncertain whether he had really shown his heart at all. In the midst of a sentiment that seemed direct from the soul, a sudden quirk of fancy would present itself to turn all athwart into whim, jest, and laughter; and the freest disclosure would as abruptly start aside, to appear nothing more than a fantastic figure of speech, or break off into irreconcilable fragments, without apparent aim or connection; but, for all this, an apology came to the breast of his friend. "He has embraced the desperate fortunes of a dethroned prince; and perhaps it depends upon the caution of this, that prince's ablest confidant, whether they are to be redeemed, or finally consigned to despair!"

The horses were at the hall door, and Sir Anthony and his male guests mounted. At sight of the friends he called to them; and the grooms bringing forward more horses, the Duke vaulted into his seat; and Louis, with the sensation of a double release, gladly followed his example. As they turned merrily down the rocky pathway which led by the ancient fosse to the open country, every man had something to say, according to his own humour, of the late festive night; but all concurred in so overcharged an anticipation of the coming evening, that it might easily be foreseen the revelry of the past would be increased to an excess in the future, which would destroy all, by drowning pleasure and consciousness in the same stream.

Sir Anthony appeared to take it for granted his nephew had completely surrendered himself to the impulse which governed the rest; and, with redoubling disgust, Louis tried to make his uncle comprehend, that so far from intending to partake the projected festivity, he would not even return to the Castle after their ride, but cross to Lindisfarne immediately. Astonishment, remonstrance, raillery, entreaties, reproaches, — all were successively and successlessly brought against him. Louis found his spirit rise with the clamour of opposition. He was now steadily doing what he always knew was his only proper conduct: the padlock, which had seemed to chain down his faculties, under a sense of committing wrong, now burst asunder, and he was all himself again. Sir Anthony affected not to believe him serious; talked of Violante; and whispering the noisy sheriff and his next neighbour, a loud laugh pealed through the party, all of whom drew at once around Louis.

"What do you mean, gentlemen?" cried he, glad to be manually opposed by others beside his uncle.

"To bear you as the Loves bore Adonis," cried Wharton gaily, and planting his steed also before that of his friend.

"*Et tu, Brute?*" cried Louis, and struck his spurs into the sides of his horse. The high-mettled animal sprang through the foremost rank; dispersed the rest; and starting forward with the speed of the wind, was plunged by his determined rider into the flashing waters of the tide.*

CHAPTER V.

While these events were agitating the dissipated circle at the Castle, the simple family on the opposite shore were en-

* "Et tu, Brute?" — *And thou, Brutus?* — the words with which Cæsar reproached Brutus, when he saw his dagger amongst the conspirators. These three Latin words, having been mistaken, in this text, by more than one intelligent reader, for misprinted French of a very different meaning, it has been deemed expedient to add this, otherwise impertinent note.

gaged in far different scenes. Its Pastor opened his pious views to the noble-minded Santa Cruz; and the young people obeyed the venerable man's commands, to enjoy the vernal hour of day with all the zest of their as vernal years.

Cornelia conducted Don Ferdinand under the ivy-crowned wall which sheltered her uncle's flower-garden. He admired the disposition of its parterres, and wondered how such beautiful chinasters, balsams, and hollyhocks could bloom in so northern a climate. Alice led him to the aromatic spot where she had stationed her bees, and showed him the beds of thyme, lavender, and other sweet herbs she had planted for their food. A little onward, raised on a low mound, stood an old sun-dial. Its bank was covered with mignonette; and many of Alice's industrious favourites were loading their wings with its extracted honey. She gathered a cluster of the flowers, and gave it to Ferdinand. Cornelia stooped to pluck a piece of sweetbriar, but the prickles prevented her. "I want my cousin's dexterous fingers here," said she, with a smile.

"Rather his bold ones!" cried Alice, as she saw Ferdinand break off the bough and present it to her sister, leaving the thorns in his hand.

"If he be as happy as I am in being wounded in so good a cause," rejoined Ferdinand, "Mr. de Montemar is more to be envied than any man on earth."

"How so?" enquired Alice, with an incredulous laugh. "I see no pleasure in being pricked and scratched for the prettiest flower in the world!"

"But I do, sweet Alice!" said he, with a gallant smile, as he presented another branch of the shrub to her. With a faint blush, she glanced at her sister; but Cornelia, thinking at the moment of the truant Louis, had not heard what was said; and Alice, seeing no surprise in her sister at the familiarity of the term, supposed it was a foreign custom; and unlatching a wicket which led to the pasture land, bounded with the lightness of a fawn to the top of an adjacent hillock. She stood in the midst of its heathy grass, calling on her sister to follow her; for that was the spot whence they might show Don Ferdinand the objects of the

island to best advantage. Cornelia and her companion were soon by her side; and as the young Spaniard's excursive eye shot across the island's self to the surrounding ocean, he perceived a cluster of rocks to the north, shining, in the noonday sun, like gems on the belt of the horizon.

"I have heard," said he, smiling, "that in days of yore, a band of wandering sages, sailing in these seas, discovered certain islands, encompassed with floods of light, and inhabited by blissful souls. These fortunate adventurers called them the Islands of Blessedness. Since that time no traveller has been able to find them. But, as I am a kinsman of the great Columbus, I venture to hope, the happy rediscovery was reserved for me; and that, *there they are!*"

Both sisters remarked the direction of his eyes; and laughing heartily at the compliment his fancy had paid to the most barren of their rocks, told him, they were the Ferne Islands. "And so far from being blessed places," said Alice, "my uncle would never allow Cornelia or me to go near them; the landing is so dangerous."

"But Louis often visits them with the kelp-gatherers," rejoined Cornelia: "while their fires reduce the weed to ashes, he generally throws himself on a jutting rock over the sea, to command the view, and sketch the group. Were you to walk these shores on a fine evening, at that season of the year, you would admire the picturesque vapour from the kelp-fires, as its wreathing volumes sail away, and mingle with the clouds. I have heard my uncle say, they remind him of the volcanic isles near Etna."

"But you would not mistake the kelp-gatherers for blessed spirits!" returned the gay Alice.

"Nor run the risk of my life to draw their portraits!" replied Ferdinand.

Alice sportively shook her head:—"Ah, poor Louis! —He loves roaming about amongst odd places, and hunting strange out-of-the-way things, as much as you may love a quiet walk, or a pretty bunch of flowers," added she, observing the pleasure with which the young Spaniard was smelling to the mignonette; "and so we must forgive him!"

Ferdinand was gratified at this playful reference to her

fragrant gift. "I do not believe," cried he, "that Mr. Montemar can love rock or quicksand, better than I could love and cherish some of the sweet flowers of this island, which he seems content to cast away! and, pardon me, if I a little doubt the taste of your adventurous cousin?"

The sisters did not quite understand this speech, which seemed to begin in sport, but certainly ended with a serious tone.

"You mistake my cousin," said Cornelia, "if you suppose he chooses perilous excursions, from a vanity to show his courage. Courage is so natural to him, that he never thinks about it. The activity of his mind makes exercise necessary to him; and the fearlessness of his temper renders that easy to him, which might be difficult, if not impossible, to timid characters. But, indeed, his affection for us has been the most frequent cause of risking his safety; for he deems no attempt too hazardous, by which he can gratify a wish of my mother, or a desire of my sister, or myself."

"My uncle will tell you, such have been his ways from a child," cried Alice; "and from the first of my recollection, I remember these frightful tokens of his love! Coming in, with curious aquatic plants, torn from some hardly accessible rock, for my uncle's herbal; or making his appearance with shells for me, which he had swam for, and sought in the sand-bank, at the point-head. I am sure I have often admired their beauties through my tears; but he never would believe we could be frightened."

"Indeed," rejoined Cornelia, "after old fisher John's two sons were drowned, I have known Louis absent for hours on the open sea, in the poor man's boat, helping him to draw his nets. For nothing is troublesome, or dangerous to him, that is connected with affection or benevolence."

"Ah, those daring expeditions suit your taste, Cornelia!" said Alice, with a shudder. "You, like Louis, love *to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm!* I can never forget his absence one whole night, during a frightful tempest, when we did not know but that each horrid blast we listened to, was that which was sinking him to a watery

grave. My terrors cost me a fit of illness,—and then my uncle made him see the cruelty, and even wickedness, of being rashly brave; for ever since he has been careful not to put himself in any needless danger."

Ferdinand's hilarity gradually sunk to his former melancholy, during these latter observations from the sisters. He felt a sense of feebleness in his own character, which made him envy the enterprising spirit of Louis; and as Alice ceased speaking, he murmured to himself — "Here, indeed, is the fire of youth; the animating principle of future greatness; while that which burns in my veins, withers my very vitals, and consumes every nobler element within me. Wretch that I am, reprobate and accursed!" His lips moved almost audibly, as his accusing spirit uttered the last words; and unconsciously turning from the sisters, he walked hastily down the hill towards the cliff.

Cornelia and Alice, astonished, gazed on each other:— "That is very odd!" cried the latter; "did you observe his countenance?"

"Yes, he suddenly knit his brows; and, I thought, looked quite strange!"

"Let us follow him," rejoined Alice; "if he go on at that rate, and not being aware, he may slip down some of the fissures into the sea."

Alice hastened forward as she spoke; and not merely walking, but running, joined him as he had gained the top of the cliff. Cornelia came up soon after; and seeking to divert Ferdinand from whatever painful thoughts possessed him, she uttered the first idea that presented itself, and exclaimed as she approached, "You two stand there, your garments waving in the breeze, like Adam and the angel, overlooking the earth and its waters."

"To me," answered Ferdinand, "it might well be called the hill of paradise; if you, and your sweet Alice, would indeed be to me what the sister angels were to the erring father of mankind!"

Alice looked from him to her sister, with a tender pity that did not escape its object. Again he found a balmy warmth encircle his heart. The freezing hand of despair, which a moment before had obliterated all other impres-

sions, was again withdrawn. "Have I," said he, to himself, "indeed interested this innocent creature? I, so unworthy, so self-despised!" He drew towards her, as she followed Cornelia; who, turned through some broken crags, and crossing a ravine, brought her companions forth on a ridge that faced the west. At their feet lay the strait, which divides the two shores. The tide was at ebb, and rapidly discovering the sands and sunken rocks which form the foundation of the stupendous cliff of Bamborough.

"What princely fortress is that?" demanded Ferdinand, surprised into exclamation by the commanding line of coast, and the magnitude of the warlike structure which crowned its summit.

"It is the castle of my mother's ancestors," replied Cornelia; "and under that parental roof, when my dear grandfather lived, she passed many a happy day. My sister Alice was born there."

Ferdinand could not forbear looking from its regal grandeur, to the two lovely beings by his side. The offspring of *the barons bold*, who in former ages had poured the storm of sovereignty from those embattled walls, were now content to pass their lives in an obscure parsonage, on an almost deserted island! Their garments were simple as their lot; but the air of the one still demanded the coronet of her ancestors; while the other, tender, sportive, and unaspiring, seemed ready to shrink from the threatening front of what had once been the stronghold of her fathers. "Bright Cornelia!" said he to himself, as he looked on the castle, and listened to her observations; "your lover may be he, who courts the wonderful, the wild, on the dizzy steep, or the wide ocean! But my heart—had it not engendered the vulture which preys upon its vitals!—would cleave to seclusion and bliss, in the bosom of your endearing, timid Alice."

Cornelia described the extent of the ground which the fortress occupied; enumerated its towers, and assigned to each the era of its erection. She pointed, with particular complacency, to the white walls of the formidable dungeon; and quoted archives in Durham Abbey, to prove that its foundation was the work of a Roman emperor. She named

the Saxon kings, from Ida to Egbert, who had raised their standard on its roof; and made Ferdinand distinguish a high-grated window, which yet went by the name of Queen Bebha's chamber.

"But what is that in the sea yonder?" asked her auditor; who had accidentally looked down to the dashing surges at the foot of the rock, while she was directing his attention along its summit. The eyes of the sisters followed his.

"It seems to be somebody swimming," said Cornelia.

"To me," cried Alice, "it appears to be a man on horseback."

"Hardly possible!" exclaimed Ferdinand; "what human being would be so mad? Or rather, how can any man and horse live on such a sea as that!"

"It is, indeed, rashness, in the present state of the tide;" returned Cornelia; "the sands are so shifting, and the sea so rough. But when it is more out, persons, acquainted with the track, may find safe opportunities of passing on foot, or on horseback, from the main land. We have it on record, that in the persecuting reign of William the Conqueror, a little army of monks brought the relics of Saint Cuthbert from Durham, to the opposite shore, and crossed with them, dry-shod, to Holy Island."

"Our cockle gatherers find the fords, continually," cried Alice; "but certainly never with the tide in the state it is now; so most likely, that is some poor smuggler flying from the revenue officers."

While Cornelia expressed her pity, and her fear that this desperate violator of the law might, perhaps, perish in his crime, Ferdinand uttered a wish to see so hardy a cavalier come to land.

In descending to the beach, the young Spaniard was appalled by the terrible roaring of the waves, bursting, and foaming against the rocks, and rushing, with the rumbling of thunder, into the caverns beneath the island. A wide gorge in the cliff again discovered the sea, and the object of his curiosity.

The element was rolling mountains high; and he saw the raging billows break over the horse and its rider. The

noble animal rose from the abyss; while his master appeared resolutely breasting the surge, whose lashing waters whitened his sides with their foam. In one of these fearful moments, a huge wave, rolling towards the island, raised the man and horse upon its immense bosom, to a height almost level with the rock; and then plunging with them into the depth, seemed to cover them for ever.

"Merciful Heaven, it is Louis!" cried Alice;—in that fatal instant she had recognised him, and with frantic shrieks ran forward, as if to meet him in the ocean.

Finding that the extraordinary swell of the last wave had not merely torn the footing of his stout hunter from the ground, but had exhausted his strength, Louis slid from his back, while he was yet overwhelmed by the weight of the surge; and grasping the bridle, swam with him through the deep water. Coming to the breakers, he waded the rest; and having drawn his faithful horse on the shelving rocks, was patting his heaving sides, when he perceived the terrified party rushing down the nearest path to his assistance. Ferdinand had beheld the whole with wonder. And now that he stood apart, and saw the young De Montemar, with dripping garments, and uncovered head, reining and soothing the alarmed animal, that he might not injure the sisters, the astonished Spaniard could not help exclaiming to himself,—

> "Mounting with springing step the broad ascei
> A buoyant form of matchless shape I spied,
> Attired like one whose ardent soul is bent
> To win in fleetest race, by glory's side.
> Flinging its changeless splendour far and wide,
> From his bright forehead flamed the polar star;
> Through his clear cheek the ruby-tinctured tide
> Shone with a healthful glow; while on the air,
> Back from his radiant eyes, was blown the clustering hair!"

"Louis! Louis!" exclaimed both sisters at once. Alice clasped her hands, and sobbed aloud.

"Why, oh Louis! encounter all this danger?" cried Cornelia.

"I had no other way of getting to you."

"Hear him!" cried Alice, running back to Ferdinand, and grasping his arm; "I knew it was not his own will that detained him from us. Dear, dear, Louis!" And

weeping again with the excess of her joy, she unconsciously allowed Ferdinand to support her with his arm.

Louis called to a fisherman he descried among the rocks; and, having given him his horse, to lead to the Parsonage stables, proceeded with Cornelia to join the trembling Alice and the young Spaniard; who, his cousin had told him, was their uncle's guest.

"My sweetest Alice!" said Louis, as he approached her. The moment she heard his footstep, and the salutation, she took her hands from her streaming eyes, and threw herself upon his breast.

Cornelia put her hand upon Ferdinand's arm, and impelling him gently forward; "Pardon me, Don Ferdinand," said she; "but Alice is so weak in her nerves! Or rather, her tender nature is so alive to any danger threatening those she loves, that at such times she is hardly herself. She will soon recover, when left alone with our too dear, too rash cousin."

"What could impel Mr. de Montemar to so extraordinary an act?"

"He has just told me; his word, given to my uncle, not to be a willing inmate with Duke Wharton. His Grace is at the Castle; and he and Sir Anthony, finding Louis determined to return to Lindisfarne, would have made him their prisoner, had he not escaped by this terrible expedient."

"But why did Mr. Athelstone require such a promise from your cousin?" asked Ferdinand; "has the gay Duke offended your uncle?"

"As he has offended all virtuous men," replied Cornelia, with severity. Ferdinand regretted his inconsiderate question. He sighed deeply; "Happy De Montemar!" exclaimed he, "to be in this blessed seclusion, so strange to vice, that its first aspect causes you to fly with horror! In the wide, worthless world, Miss Coningsby, vice meets us at every turning; and, to our shame, familiarity with the object soon makes us indifferent to its deformity."

The young Spaniard again lost his self-possession; and with an almost convulsed countenance, and waving his hand for her not to follow him, he darted through a

chasm, into the crags; and by their intervening projections, instantly disappeared. Cornelia joined Alice and her cousin; and, as they walked homeward, gave to Louis a brief account of the visit of the Marquis and his son. In answer, he much surprised her, when he declared, this to be the first intimation he had received of their arrival. Alice was not sparing of her invectives against Sir Anthony, for his dishonourable concealment of her uncle's messenger; and then enquired how Louis had at last broken away from his detainers.

"That you shall hear by and by," said he; "but if Mr. Athelstone knew the Duke of Wharton was at Bamborough, what must he have thought of my apparent neglect of his summons? Of such shameless contempt of my promise?

"No circumstance could have made him believe, that any neglect came from you," cried Alice; "but we never heard of that frightful Duke being there: so my uncle thought nothing about your stay, only as he regretted your losing so much of the society of these noble Spaniards." On the first intimation of their being Spaniards, Louis had eagerly enquired whether they came from his father; and Cornelia having answered, No; that their errand was the young man's health; he listened with benevolent interest to Alice's questions, of what was become of Don Ferdinand. Cornelia shook her head; and had just finished an account of his strange behaviour, when they arrived at the garden wicket. Louis entered the house by a side-door, that he might rid himself of his disordered clothes before he saw the family; and Cornelia went to communicate his arrival to her mother and uncle.

Being satisfied of the safety of her cousin, Alice felt her anxiety re-awaken for another object. She lingered in the garden behind her sister; she returned to the wicket, and stood gazing through it; then stepping up the sun-dial mound, looked from side to side over the boundaries of the garden. Ferdinand was no where to be descried. The treacherous footing among the rocks, the perpendicular cliffs, his abstracted eye, and hurrying step, again presented themselves to her thoughts; and, alarmed and agitated,

she turned wistfully towards the hill beyond the little gate. "From that spot, I might certainly see him. But if he were to see me, how strange he would think it! And Cornelia too, that I should absent myself from dear Louis, after such danger!"

Just as, with blush succeeding blush, she made these comments, the object of her anxiety appeared from the opposite side on the top of the hill, leaning on his father's arm. Joy, confusion, a sense of shame she had never felt before, overwhelmed her; and springing from the mound, she ran hastily across the garden. She darted into the house, as if fearful of pursuit; and stopped, panting, before the door of her uncle's library. Supposing it vacant, and glad to recover breath unobserved, she opened the door, and found herself in the presence of her uncle.

"My child," cried he, "come hither; and, with me, thank the Giver of all good for the virtuous firmness of your cousin! He has not only preserved that bloom of truth unimpaired, which, if once lost, never is regained; but he has risked his life this morning, to avoid a man, whom, I know, he loves, but whose society he relinquishes because he believes him to be as full of vices as of charms. Come, Alice, and bow with me before his Almighty Guardian!"

Alice sunk on her knees by the side of her uncle. She bent her face upon his fervent hands, and pressed them with her lips, as her heart breathed with devotion the thanksgiving his eloquent piety pronounced.

Cornelia, having been the glad messenger to Mr. Athelstone, and afterwards to her mother, of the safe return of Louis, accompanied Mrs. Coningsby to the general sitting-room. It was that in which they had welcomed the travellers the preceding night, and where they found them now. Ferdinand had cast himself into a chair, fatigued and gloomy. His father stood by the window, gazing on him in anxious silence. Mrs. Coningsby had not time to address either, before the Pastor entered. He advanced immediately to Santa Cruz; and, his aged eyes not discerning the peculiar sadness of his guest, "My Lord Marquis," cried he, "Louis de Montemar is returned.

And I take shame to myself for having doubted the integrity of his word."

"My son has told me sufficient of the manner in which Mr. de Montemar has kept it, to fill me with respect for his principles, and to inspire me with something more than admiration for the determination with which he has asserted them."

Before the Marquis had ceased speaking, a quick step was heard in the passage.

"Here is my nephew," cried Mrs. Coningsby; and the next moment he opened the door; but perceiving the strangers, he checked the buoyant gladness with which he was coming forward, and, with a graceful bow, advanced into the room. Alice glided in after him, and took a seat behind her mother's chair. Mr. Athelstone immediately named to him the Marquis Santa Cruz, and Don Ferdinand d'Osorio. The Marquis scanned for a moment the son of Ripperda, and the comparison he could not but draw, was wormwood to the heart of a father. Nature had given Louis a passport to almost every bosom; a countenance and a figure, which needed no addition to complete the perfect form of youthful nobleness.

"Mr. de Montemar," said Santa Cruz, "you have this day proved, how worthy you are of the name you bear. I shall be proud of your friendship for my son."

Louis found himself pressed to the breast of Don Ferdinand, who indistinctly repeated his father's assurance of esteem. Praise, and even flattery, of dubious import, were fresh in the mind of Louis; but there was something in this encomium uttered by the Marquis, an air of noble sincerity, rather than of courtly politeness, that filled its object with a pleasure very apparent in the luminous countenance with which he bowed in modest silence to what was said. The Marquis pursued the subject, with a vehemence not usual to him; and still addressing Louis, spoke of the indispensable duty of maintaining mutual confidence between relations; and then expatiated on the honourable contest, which man is commissioned to hold at all periods of his life, with the ignoble impulses of sense,

till the appetites are subdued, and the passions themselves become the agents of virtue."

"Few young men," added he, "would have made so bold an amendment as you have done, on the story of Telemachus. He, waited till Mentor thrust him from the rock; you, cast yourself into the sea!"

Louis lost the pleasure of being approved, in the embarrassing personality of the language. He thought the Marquis went much further than delicacy could warrant, or real respect for the object of his praise would have dictated. What had he, then, heard of the scene at the Castle? How much was left, for himself to tell his revered uncle? And whether did he indeed deserve praise, or blame, for his tardy, yet desperate, determination to escape? While this passed in his thoughts, he looked down, disordered. But some were present, who read in the anxious face of Santa Cruz, a dearer aim than paying a compliment to a stranger.

Mrs. Coningsby observed that Ferdinand was discomposed by his father's remarks; and the Marquis himself soon perceived the mischief he had done. He sought to excite a generous emulation in his despondent son: but he saw that his extraordinary eulogy of Louis had been received by Ferdinand as an insidious reproach to himself; and, resentful of the covert infliction, he stood distant, frowning, and pale. A withering chill struck to the heart of the father, who became abruptly silent. Striving to shake off his embarrassment, Louis looked up, and met the haughty glance of Don Ferdinand. When their eyes encountered, the Spaniard's ashy cheek flashed scarlet, and he turned with a scornful air towards the window. This, by offending Louis, tended to restore his self-possession. Whatever the father might intend, by his excessive praise, the son evidently showed that he despised its object. Louis thought he could not mistake the looks of the young Spaniard, and a sense of self-respect immediately dispelled his confusion.

Pleased with the truth of the Marquis's remarks, the Pastor had remained a gratified listener. But Alice, observing the gloom of Ferdinand, and half suspecting there

was some reproving reference to him, in what had been said, took advantage of the general pause; and hoping to change the conversation, or, at least, take it out of the Marquis's hands, she whispered her mother, to ask Louis for the particulars of his detention at the Castle. Mrs. Coningsby nodded her approval. "It will interest our guests," said she,—"and I am anxious to know how Louis could be driven to so dangerous an alternative."

Louis felt new embarrassment at this request; and in a low voice, he replied to his aunt, "I am sure, madam, you will excuse me, if I do not relate circumstances in the presence of these gentlemen, which might seem to cast some blame on a relation, to whom I owe gratitude, if not unquestionable respect."

The Marquis rose from his seat, on overhearing this answer, and taking Louis's hand, "Young man," said he, "I honour you." Louis could not doubt that look, that voice, that pressure; and blaming himself for having been inclined to take a prejudice against the father, from the repelling manners of the son, he gazed long and silently on the closed door, after the Marquis and Ferdinand had left the room.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDERSTANDING the delicacy of Santa Cruz, in thus having withdrawn; and to leave the room free for his return, the Pastor retired with his family into the library, where they listened, without interruption, to a brief account of what had passed at the Castle. Louis only excepted Wharton's mysterious discourse; and a little softened his representation of the scenes with the female visiters. He did not mean to deceive in either case; but honour forbade his betraying the Duke; and the decency of a manly mind almost unconsciously threw a shade over descriptions, which confessed their nature, by shrinking from disclosure.

Mr. Athelstone scarcely spoke during the recital. He

listened with an attention, that considered every circumstance, and weighed every word. The ladies were affected differently. Mrs. Coningsby inveighed against Sir Anthony, and extolled Duke Wharton, for his unexpected interference in favour of her nephew's return. Cornelia expressed her wonder, that women of any respectability could bring themselves to share the boisterous society of the baronet and his companions. And Alice asked, as actresses must copy the best models, whether it could really be the fashion in London, and abroad, for women to be so very easy with men? — If it is," said she, looking at her sister, "how very unmannered Don Ferdinand must think you and me!"

Louis smiled, and thought, "Did you know all the ease of those ladies, how little would you have sullied those pure lips with even the mention of their names." But he only answered, "My dear Alice, licence in your sex is more complimented than respected by ours. Modesty in woman must be the fashion, with men of principle, in every country."

When he closed his relation, Mrs. Coningsby rose from her chair, in vehement indignation at her brother; who had thus sought to gratify a whim, at the expense of his own honour, and the risk of his nephew's life. The sisters trembled at what might have been the fatal consequence of Louis's desperate escape. And to calm the three, by diverting their attention to what, he felt, they were all most inhospitably neglecting, Mr. Athelstone proposed their seeking the Marquis and his son, while he would remain a few minutes with Louis, to make some necessary observations on what they had just heard.

Louis foresaw that his uncle meant to enquire more particularly respecting the Duke, than he had thought fit to do before his nieces. When they had left the room, the good old man drew his chair close to his nephew, and, with earnest tenderness, asked him, *if he had disclosed all?* The cheeks of Louis kindled, and his eyes fell.

"My child," cried the Pastor, "these answer for you. You have not! I guessed it, from your manner, when you spoke of those women, and that dissembling Wharton.

Fear not to confess to me. What is it that you have withheld from me?"

"Nothing, I trust, my dearest sir, to justify this extraordinary agitation in yourself."

"Thank God! thank God. That open brow is still unmarked with consciousness of guilt. Oh, my child, may it be ever thus with thee! Hold fast that innocence, so bright, so peace-bestowing! and never hesitate doing what you did this morning, risking your life in its preservation."

"I never will, my uncle: so help me, Heaven!"

A solemn pause ensued. When Mr. Athelstone again spoke, the restored serenity of his mind was seen, in the benign composure with which he proceeded to discuss the very subject which, a few moments before, had occasioned him so much emotion. He at once expressed his belief, that his nephew's contest at Bamborough had been of a more serious nature, than he had yet allowed; and he hoped he was not uncharitable in suspecting that Duke Wharton made those theatrical ladies his tools, to detain Louis, while he played the disinterested part of promoting his release. Louis would not admit this inference; but he acknowledged that his uncle had guessed right with regard to the share the ladies had in protracting his stay. He ingenuously told the whole relating to them; and did not even disguise his own delusion of senses during the midnight revels.

"The venerable Pastor lifted up his clasped hands: — "Anthony! vile Anthony!" were his ejaculations during the recital. "Oh, Louis," cried he, "the bane of your life was in that hour! in the blindness of your cheated imagination, had you put forth your hand to take the poisoned cup. Alas! dear child of my sainted niece, how near were these grey hairs being brought with shame and sorrow to the grave!" He paused; then resumed; for Louis was too much affected to interrupt him: —

"I cannot excuse the Duke. I know him to be profligate; though to you he affects to despise the companions of his debasing pleasures. These women were in his train; and I firmly believe, he excited their practices on your inexperienced heart."

"How? — Why?"

"That he might have you in his power."

"For what, my uncle?" He had no sooner asked the question, than recollection of the park-discourse answered him.

"I know not for what," replied Mr. Athelstone: "probably he does not exactly know himself. But there is a principle in wickedness, that delights in laying human virtue waste, merely for the sake of destruction! The prince of evil was a *murderer from the beginning!* and so are all his followers."

"But, my dear sir, taking it for granted that Duke Wharton had an object to gain with me, how would my subjection to the seductions of these women have put me in his power?"

"He would have been your master in the new science you began to learn. He would have governed your passions by the wiles of these wantons; — and, self-abased, and dependent on him for the wretched wages of your sin, how abject would have been your slavery! How omnipotent his control!"

Louis felt the cold damps of suspicion drop upon his heart. He turned pale; he gasped for breath. A thousand circumstances, which might corroborate his uncle's suggestion, rushed upon his recollection. Though Wharton ridiculed the advances of these women, he did not repel them. Though he scorned the sensualist's pursuits, he boasted of seeming to share it, that he might turn him to his purpose. And when Louis retreated, in his sight, from the temptations he feared, did not the Duke rather laugh him into daring their strength, than encourage his flying from their influence? Louis had never before doubted human being; much less suspected perfidy in the man who solicited his confidence, and whose irresistible persuasions had charmed him of more than half his heart. The Pastor grasped the cold hand of his nephew.

"Louis, can you be thus disturbed, by nothing more than my representation of what might have been?"

"My most revered, my best friend!" cried he, straining the old man's hand to his breast; "there are some views

of human nature that strike an honest heart with horror. But I cannot suspect Duke Wharton of such murderous treachery, when he had that very heart in his hand. Oh, my uncle, wrest from me the thought! It seems to cover the character of man with one universal blot."

Mr. Athelstone allowed the violence of these feelings to exhaust itself, before he made a reply. He saw something had passed between Louis and the Duke, which the former still kept secret; and willing to show his nephew, that he believed he might trust his integrity, the good Pastor determined not to press a disclosure, the young man appeared so averse to offering voluntarily.

"I perceive, Louis," said he, "that you do think, it is possible you might have been placed in the predicament I have supposed. I also perceive, this subtle nobleman has got you so far into his power, as to have obtained your confidence, and a pledge from you of secrecy. I do not require you to betray it; but I warn you again! You have put *your heart into the hand of a man,* who is practised in deceiving; who has no value for your deposit, but as it suits his purpose to make you *his toy or his tool.* These are his words, as you repeated them to me; and let them be his judge."

Louis was shocked to find this accusation lodge, and not rebound from his heart. He acknowledged, that the Duke did engage him in a conversation he would rather have avoided; but no pledge of secrecy had been demanded; yet it was implied; and he trusted, his uncle would think the word of honour he had given ought to be respected.

"Your uncle, my child, will never induce you to violate that fidelity of word, which he has ever taught you to regard as one of the most sacred bonds of society. But, without committing yourself by any answer to what I may say, you must allow me to speak to the subject, on which I believe your honour has been given."

"Speak freely, sir, and I shall be grateful; but on your own terms I make no answer."

He prepared to listen, looking down, that Mr. Athel-

stone might not read by the consciousness of his eyes how true or false was his guess.

The good Pastor had no difficulty in fixing his suspicions on some confidential communication respecting the expatriated royal family; and he enforced upon Louis, that Duke Wharton was not always so firmly its friend. At his first appearance in public life, he wore a sword with *Magna Charta* engraved on its hilt; and defended the cause of liberty, and the Hanoverian succession, with all the charms of his eloquence. But the unfortunate Lord Derwentwater, (a near relation of the Duke,) was put to death by the new government, for adherence to the old. — About the same time, too, the constitutional periods of parliaments were suddenly abrogated; and other clouds rising on the political horizon, the young statesman became alarmed, publicly disclosed his resentment at the severe execution of his kinsman; and scrupled not to announce his indignation against acts, which, he affirmed, revived exploded means of oppression, and put the nation into the hands of strangers. The consequences were, his open quarrel with the ministry; and whispers at court, that Duke Wharton was more than suspected of assisting to maintain the interest which the expelled James Stuart still preserved in some part of the kingdom. Mr. Athelstone knew that hopes were now reviving, which, it was supposed, had been finally crushed six years ago on the field of Glenshiel. But a patriot king was still only a vision. There were features in the personal character of George the First, which, when become known, rendered him unpopular with a high spirited and intelligent nobility. He was haughty, reserved, and severe. But all sincere members of the reformed church, and friends of national liberty, amongst the middle classes of the people, had the good sense to compromise the defects of the individual, for the general benefit of possessing a Protestant king, and a limited monarchy. A large proportion of the nobility, also, were of this opinion; while others merely followed the stream of power; and the remainder rather endured, than rejoiced in the changed succession. Though the principle

of the nation at large was thus firm to its own measure of faith, and of loyalty, yet parties ran high in the English metropolis; and the court at St. Germain's, mistaking the rage of faction, for public discontent, conceived new hopes of being recalled to the seat of its ancient glory. Elated with these expectations, the widowed queen of James the Second, in one part of the continent, and the Prince her son in another, drew around them all whom personal devotion, fancied interest, or a spirit of adventure, could stimulate to try again the often-disputed cause. The policy of Europe contributed to keep alive these pretensions; for, whenever any new circumstance of national jealousy excited a country to disturb the peace of England, the rival power had only to exchange ambassadors with St. Germain's, and make the restoration of its family a pretext for hostilities. Such had been the case in 1715, and also in 1719, when Spain assisted the Chevalier Saint George in his descent on Scotland. But with new ministers came new systems; and it was now whispered, that Philip the Fifth was veering round to the side of the house of Hanover.

Mr. Athelstone ran hastily over these preliminaries, to meet the inference he meant to draw; for, having observed their unconscious commentary in the face of his nephew, he believed that in guessing the subject of the Duke's discourse, he had also discovered its motive. His morning's conversation with the Marquis had furnished him with an anecdote which he thought would bear upon his present surmises. During the preceding Christmas, the Spanish ambassador at Paris had met Wharton at a diplomatic dinner, given by the French minister. Flushed with wine, half-jest, half-earnest, the gay Duke interrupted a discussion on the desperation of the Stuart cause by declaring himself its champion. "The whole has been mismanaged!" cried he: "Perth, and two or three other old women, like Macbeth's witches, have met together under the portal of St. Germain's, to prophesy of crowns, and produce halters. James wants men, and veritable action. I bring a seisin of these in my own person; and am ready to run a tilt with the knight of Hanover, and Squire Wal-

pole to boot, whenever your good kings will open the field to me!"

"My dear Louis," continued the Pastor, "here, I doubt not, this zealous champion has come to collect his lists; and you would be a second, to gain him a triumph."

Louis turned his eyes on his uncle.

"Yes, you,—as a promise of your father."

"My father, sir! how could I engage for my father? and how could my father serve the cause, you suspect the Duke has at heart?"

"Your father was the energy of Holland; and, I understand, is the wisdom of Spain. We knew that he was respected by the Spanish nation, and possessed the confidence of its monarch. But I was not aware of the extent of his power in that country, till I learnt it yesterday from the Marquis Santa Cruz. He tells me, that since the removal of Cardinal Alberoni, others may have the title of prime minister, but your father dictates the measures. 'Indeed,' added the Marquis, 'in any state he must ever have proved himself a great man; but Spain is his country; and restored to that, he flourishes like a tree in its native soil.'"

Louis knew that his family was originally Spanish. That his grandfather, Don Juan de Montemar, Duke of Ripperda, had removed from Spain in a pique against his sovereign. On further provocation, he joined an insurrection in the Netherlands. The King retaliated, by confiscating his patrimonial estates in Andalusia, and degrading him from the rank of grandee. Separated for ever from his native country, and loathing its very remembrance, he laid aside his Spanish title with disdain, and became a citizen of Groningen. On purchasing large estates in that province, he derived the rank of Baron; and soon after married the beautiful heiress of the late Prince Casimir, of Nassau. The Prince had been killed in battle against the Spaniards; and the proud and resentful Ripperda gave his hand, with peculiar complacency, to his daughter. A son was the fruit of this marriage, whom its happy mother named after her uncle and cousin, both so famous for their patriotic virtues;

one, the then existing Stadtholder of the Netherlands; the other, winning by his valiant deeds the future distinction of being made King of England. Never having any more children, the illustrious parents lavished every species of care upon this; and with a pride, which all the adopted republicanism of the father could not subdue, he saw his boy grow up with the best proofs of noble ancestry — a courteous, brave, and emulating spirit. While he was yet a youth, he fought for Holland, and for England, under the standard of his kinsman, the great King William; and particularly distinguished his name at the celebrated siege of Namur. But the elder Ripperda did not long enjoy his son's fame. He died before the young hero returned to Groningen. His mother, who inherited the intellectual ambition of her princely house, exerted all her persuasions to turn the passion of her son from military glory to political honours. She effected her purpose; for nature seconded her views. The young Baron was born to be a statesman. By an extraordinary intuition he had only to turn towards a subject to comprehend it; and the energy of action instantly followed the conviction of its utility.

He early became the confident of leading men; and, as every element takes its level, soon found his proper sphere, as the suggester and impelling agent of their boldest plans. Professing the religion of his father, which was Roman Catholic, he could not appear openly in the councils; but his mother's church was that of her country; and the bigotry of her deceased husband not having been imbibed by his son, she found no difficulty in conforming him to the simplicity of the Hollander's faith. The only obstacle being thus removed, the next assembly of the States-general saw the young Baron seated amongst them, as representative of the province of Groningen. His civic honours were quickly succeeded by his mother's death. Two years after that event he married. But his lot was not to be a domestic circle. His young baroness died in the first year of his nuptials; and he relinquished his only child to the prayers of its maternal grandfather.

Thus, separated from every object that might have had a near claim upon his heart, Ripperda gave up his soul to

the commonwealth. He travelled throughout Europe, to study the characters and politics of its rulers, in the seats of their governments; and he returned, with an extent of information, which rendered his judgment on general policy almost omniscient. His influence, too, was not less far-reaching; for he never forgot the gracious courtesies of life, in the stern pursuits of the statesman. In him was mingled a strange, but imposing union; the republican independence of a citizen of Holland, with the chivalric gallantry, and feudal grandeur, which distinguish the grandee of Spain. His house was a palace; his retinue superb; and his table open every day to the first men in the States, and to all noble strangers who visited the country. His thoughts, his time, his fortune, all were dedicated to the Republic: — but he would bestow that all, according to his own humour. Not by a covert, silent channel; but openly, bounteously, magnificently; as he thought, became him who made the dedication, and the great people by which it was accepted. With this profusion, he was no prodigal. His estates in Groningen, and the adjacent provinces, were immense; but they were not his only means. His expansive genius had grasped the various resources of commerce; and the treasures which poured in to him from every point of the compass rendered his expenditure exhaustless. Thus absorbed in a wide-spreading vortex of public duties, which seemed by each successive movement to separate his thoughts still farther from domestic recollections, it is not surprising that he almost ceased to remember he was a father. Indeed, the image of his absent son never presented itself, but when occasional letters arrived from Mr. Athelstone; and then the thought once or twice occurred to him, to have Louis to Holland; but the next public despatch dissipated the idea; and it never crossed him again, till some other letter recalled the wish — to be as speedily forgotten. Meanwhile, the great events of Europe were operating an unlooked-for change in the destiny of Baron de Ripperda.

When Louis the Fourteenth of France died, his descendant, Philip the Fifth of Spain, felt himself released

from a yoke, in which there had been more of the despot than of the parent. And, in consequence of certain political changes, which he immediately proposed, the States-general found it necessary to confide their affairs at his court, to some man, of a diplomatic genius capable of coping not only with the recondite policy of Alberoni, but to parry the variety of talent possessed by the other foreign ministers assembled at Madrid. Universal suffrage named the Baron de Ripperda, and without demur he undertook the embassy.

During a long and complicated negotiation at Madrid, he became the object of general interest and curiosity. His fine person, and exquisitely polished manners, were themes of amazement and admiration with the Queen and her ladies. Such graces of mien, and eloquence of discourse, could hardly be native, or acquired by a Hollander! But when it was understood, that his father, and all his paternal ancestors were Spaniards, the enthusiasm of the Queen was excited, to re-unite so much talent to the service of its original country. His favour with the royal Isabella was no trifling object of observation with the foreign ministers. But the jealousy, which his acute penetration, and alert turns in diplomacy, might have kept on the alarm, was beguiled of its vigilance, by the suavity of his manners, and the ability he possessed of winning confidence, while he gained his object. He knew how to wear his triumphs with discretion; for, content with victory, he never displayed its ensigns. Thus, he noiselessly pursued his diplomatic advantages; and had subdued the whole field, before his adversary even perceived his banner on the ground. The object of his mission being obtained, he returned to Holland. The States-general received him with public testimonies of satisfaction: but he found his former sway in their councils traversed by a number of new representatives, impatient of dictation, and jealous of his former supremacy in the state. Though he had brought in his hand a treaty, that proved his unswerving fidelity to Holland, these turbulent men affected to suspect, he might hereafter be too well inclined to favour a country, which had just invited him, with every maternal persuasion, to

return to her bosom. Despising the juvenile demagogues, who presumed to insinuate suspicions against his public faith, and indignant at the timidity of his colleagues, in suffering the utterance of such slanderous insults, he boldly declared, that the ingratitude of the States-general now determined him to re-unite himself to the land of his fathers. "But," said he, "the unchecked obloquy of these novices shall not provoke me to forget, when returned to my mother country, that Holland, until this disgraceful moment, was my affectionate nurse!"

Whilst disposing of his estates in Groningen, and turning the tide of his commercial affairs to the coast of Spain, new revolutions were taking place in the political theatre of his future action. Alberoni was dismissed the kingdom, in consequence of a trifling accident, which had the momentous effect of discovering his long-suspected plans to the eyes of alarmed Europe. It developed a scheme to aggrandise Spain, at the expense of all other nations; and had not Philip sacrificed his too daring minister, to the indignation of the monarchs, he must have felt their resentment on every side of his kingdom. The cabinet of Madrid was in tumults; and the King and Queen, looking around, with dismay, for some hand, to which they might safely commit the helm in so dangerous a storm. At this juncture, Ripperda returned, and was received with open arms. Besides his acquaintance with foreign courts, his eminent situation (some years before) at the congress of Utrecht, by bringing him into diplomatic contact with the most efficient statesmen of the different nations, had informed him so thoroughly of their individual characters, and general views for their respective countries, that he found no difficulty in presenting his now acknowledged sovereigns, with a chart, by which they might navigate the vessel of the State, out of the perilous track into which the adventurous Alberoni had plunged her.

All this was transacted in the private boudoir of her Majesty. To the inconsiderate part of the world, Ripperda appeared to have strangely resigned himself to a life of mere amusement; for to the inconsiderate, all is, what it seems. His fine person was excuse enough to them, for the

high favour in which he stood with the Queen; for, though no lip of slander had ever moved against her honour, all knew, that like the royal Elizabeth of England, she was fond of the attentions of handsome and accomplished men.

Ripperda purchased a villa near Segovia, and a superb mansion at Madrid. His household establishment, and equipages, were not less magnificent than when he was one of the *merchant princes* of Holland; and his table, in like manner, was surrounded by the best company of Spain. The gayer part, believed that his evening attendance at the *Buen Retiro*, was to play picquet with the Queen, or chess with his Majesty; but the graver sort, were fully aware that, whoever were the ostensible ministers of Philip, Ripperda was the one in fact. They could trace to his suggestion, and covert execution, various changes in the constitution, to consolidate its power and augment its resources. Plans of commerce were devised, and put into practice; and manufactures introduced at Segovia and Guadalaxara, which threatened the staple trade of Great Britain. Considering the immediate instruments of national greatness, to be wealth, and the power of defending it, he formed a design for rendering Cadiz one of the noblest ports in the world; and to establish around the coast, docks and arsenals, and every other means for constructing a formidable navy. This was the internal policy of Spain, under the secret influence of the Baron de Ripperda. With Alberoni's dismission, its external measures also took a new aspect; and with regard to the disputed accession in England, seemed meditating a change. A few years ago, Philip had assisted the Chevalier Saint George in his descent on Scotland; but he now resisted all applications to the same effect; and openly professed a growing respect for the house of Hanover. Notwithstanding similar repulses from the French minister, the irrepressible hopes of James Stuart were kept on the alert by repeated assurances from his partisans in England; the sum of which was, that a schism in the parliament had aroused corresponding jealousies amongst the people, not likely to be quelled, by a king, and an heir apparent, avowedly hostile to each other.

"At so critical a juncture, as the cabinet of St. Ger

main's supposes this to be," observed the Pastor, "it is not surprising, that Duke Wharton should grasp at any means of averting the absolute secession of Spain from his master's cause. He is aware of the Baron de Ripperda's power with King Philip: and by seeking to involve the son in a project for a second rebellion, he hopes to engage the father's pride, or his fears, in the same adventure."

The mind of Louis was powerfully excited, during a discourse which embraced so many topics; and all connected with himself, by means of a father, whom he knew by fame only; but such a fame as filled his son with an admiration, only to be equalled by the emulation which broke at once over his heart. While listening to the enumeration of his father's patriotic acts for Holland, and for Spain, he contemned the airy pretensions of every brilliant, but inferior aim to celebrity: all but substantial worthiness vanished before him, like the bursting of light upon darkness. He had heard of his father; but now he seemed to feel his presence: and he sat with his hands clasped, absorbed in the immensity of the subject.

Mr. Athelstone observed the workings of his countenance, the flashing brightness of his complexion, as his thoughts darted from Lindisfarne to Holland, and from Holland to Spain. He had not heard his uncle's last observation, with regard to Wharton's views on his father and himself. Mr. Athelstone understood the abstraction of his mind. He was too well read in the human character not to guess what was passing there. He gazed on him a few minutes in silence; contemplating, with the anxiety of parental affection, what might be the issue of the passion, he saw was then conceived in that ingenuous and ardent soul.

"But, it must not be for treason!" cried he to himself; and gently shaking the arm of his nephew, he repeated his last remark on the Duke. The good man perceived, by the start Louis gave, in recalling his diverged faculties, that his attention had long wandered; and the indulgent teacher gently recapitulated his arguments. At their conclusion, he added in a solemn voice, "You know, my child, I require no reply to this head of my discourse. But, I beseech you, weigh well the true nature of things before

you act. In no case, allow imagination to mislead you. To be on the suffering side of a contest, is generally sufficient, in the judgment of generous youth, to make it the just one. And it is a beneficent disposition of nature, to prompt man to the immediate succour of distress. Oh, that our judges would consider this, in causes of rebellion, before they condemn the young enthusiast, who would as readily raise his arm for exiled Brunswick, as for banished Stuart! It is the circumstance, that draws the sword of unreflecting youth; thought and principle unsheath that of age; and their trial and sentence should be accordingly. But let not such reflections be your apology, Louis! Another time I will give you the experience of my seventy years, by a full explanation of why England changed the nature of her ruler; and then, if you err," added the old man, with a melancholy smile, "it will be against knowledge; and not even my partial indulgence can excuse you."

He rose as he spoke, and pressing the hand on which his nephew was thoughtfully leaning his head, the worthy Pastor left him to meditate on what had passed.

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs. Coningsby found the Marquis and his son, seated amongst some pine-clad rocks, on the southern side of the Parsonage. She made an apology for the length of her absence; and the continuation of Mr. Athelstone's, by relating to his lordship much of what her nephew had communicated.

Meanwhile, Cornelia and her sister had joined Ferdinand, and sat with him in a recess of the cliff which fronted the sea. Its genial airs, warm from the south, suggested the more balmy ones of Italy and Spain to the imagination of Alice; and she soon saw all vestiges of gloom pass from the brow of the young Spaniard, as, with increasing animation, he answered her various questions on the subject

of his travels, and of his country. Cornelia enquired about the remains of ancient Rome, the eruptions of Vesuvius, and who, amongst the celebrated living characters of Italy and France, he personally knew. Alice paid little attention to his replies on these subjects, but made him describe the gardens of Naples, and the luxuriant landscapes, which double their beauties in the translucent waters of its bay. She then talked of the orange groves of his own country; and asked whether it were true, the Spanish ladies reposed every day after dinner, by the sides of fountains, under the shade of these delicious arbours. He listened to her questions with delight. It was the ingenuous curiosity of fifteen, seeking information with the confidence of innocence; and he answered her with a minuteness that showed his pleasure in dwelling on themes congenial to her taste.

Cornelia perceived that the share she wished to take in the discourse was almost wholly disregarded; but, pleased to see their guest restored to good humour, and Alice interested in such improving conversation, she cheerfully moved towards her mother and the Marquis, and soon became wholly absorbed in their discussions.

The dinner hour of the Parsonage once more assembled its family, and guests, around the social board. Peace had resumed her sway in every breast. The voice of unconscious tenderness had soothed the jealous irritability of Ferdinand, and his smiles diffused a complacency over the seriousness of his father, that harmonised with the beneficent serenity of their host. Mrs. Coningsby discoursed with the energy of an imagination whose first fires still glowed in their embers. The equable Cornelia looked around with satisfaction on the general cheerfulness; while Alice, whatever might be her volatile changes of place, always found herself settle by the side of the entertaining Spaniard. Gay as joy itself, and vibrating in every nerve the happiness she bestowed, she sported, like the young halcyon, on waves of sunshine.

Louis was not less animated. His heart no longer upbraided him; and in his own element of blameless enjoyment, with unchecked delight his eyes followed the

movements of Alice, as Ferdinand instructed her emulous curiosity in the native dances of his country. The young Spaniard seemed to have passed through the cave of Trophonius, so completely was he transformed from the reserved, frigid being of the morning. His late sallow complexion now flashed with the tints of health, and the vivacity of his conversation almost obliterated from Cornelia's remembrance, the moody wretch who had rushed from her presence only a few hours before. Alice hovered round him, like one of the zephyrs which fanned their evening festivity; and at her desire he took her mother's lute, and played and sung to it several Spanish ditties. He reclined on a low sofa, beneath the open ivied window, through whose Gothic interlacing the breeze entered with the soft light of the stars. The tender melancholy of the airs, shed a similar influence on the spirits of the youthful party; and while they listened with pensive delight to the last stanza of a plaintive seguedilla, the church clock struck twelve.

From the distant quarter of the room where Mrs. Conings by sat with her uncle and the Marquis, she had observed the amusements on the opposite side. On hearing the hour strike, she rose from her chair, and telling the young people, it was not merely the *witching time of night*, but that the Sabbath morning was begun, she broke up their revels, and dismissed them to their pillows.

Cornelia alone found uninterrupted slumber; Ferdinand did not sleep that night; Alice wondered why she did not close her eyes; and Louis lay meditating on the last four and twenty hours till day dawned, and wearied nature sank into repose.

The morning brought him a letter before he had quitted his bed. Its seal was Wharton's *manche* and *ducal coronet*. Louis held it some time unopened in his hand. What new contention might it demand of him? Was it to upbraid him for his flight? or was it an apology from the Duke for his attempt to detain him? Whatever were its errand, the sight of the letter recalled to him all the fascinations of its writer; and with trepidation he broke the seal. His heart clung to every line, while that of the

volatile writer seemed winged, and lightly skimming the surface he professed to dwell on. The letter ran thus:—

"*Et tu, Brute!* was a mighty dexterous Parthian bolt, but it whistled away, I know not whither. Would Cæsar have been so bad a marksman, as not to have distinguished his own Anthony, from the wretch who played the brute part in the capitol? Why, De Montemar, you are as much like the lantern-jawed Cassius, as I to that nose-led Stoic! You are too profound in canonization, not to have read of a certain saint, no matter his name, who, with a pair of convenient red-hot pincers, clutched the devil by his feature of honour, and so dragged him roaring round the world. Cassius was no saint, whatever he might be of a conjuror; but I never hear your king-killing demagogues, vaunting their *prince of patriots*, without seeing the pincers at his nose. So, prithee, my dainty Cæsar, no more misnomers, if you would not have me — with that name, remember yet more deeply I am Pompey's friend!

"And so, you even took the flood! I would not, for happier hours than even those your stubbornness wrested from me, I would not have lost that proof of your substance. You know I am *a being of vapour!* People who say so, must not wonder, that I should be glad to play the atmosphere round something worth my while. Louis! had you not believed them, would you have fled me like a pestilence?

"Being of a gentle nature, as full of ruth, as perhaps I ought to be of ruefulness, I will not bristle the grey locks of your venerable uncle this Saturday night, by likening him to any old woman on earth or in heaven. But I have a shrewd guess, that he pretends to dream; and on the evidence of such whimsies, will report you my orisons!

——— Pulchra Laverna,
Da mihi fallere, da justum sanctumque videri.

— Oh, wizards, how little do you know the mettle of Philip Wharton! In the face of day, and of these darkling augurs, I avow, that it is my object to make you my

own! My true spirit, wearied with the tricks of men, and their sordid chemistry,

> Delights to quaff the yet untasted spring,
> And pluck the virgin flower!

"Is there a cloak over this dagger, my panic-struck Cæsar?

"However, that there may be no more alarms in Saint Cuthbert's sanctuary, tell the holy man I have met Romulus's fate. If you look for me to-night, it must be amongst the stars; for, after this despatch, neither Bamborough nor England will hold your most faithful.

"Bamborough Castle, Saturday night."

"Gone!" cried Louis, pressing the letter between his folded hands; "neither Bamborough nor England now holds its noble writer!" He turned towards the window, which commanded a view of the sea. The distant waves were sparkling beneath the beams of the morning sun: 'Beyond those, he is sailing away, far from dark suspicion, and ungrateful De Montemar. Ah, if he, indeed, knew I had so readily imbibed my uncle's belief, — that he is deceitful, and seeking to betray me to treason and to vice! —would he thus subscribe himself, my *Faithful?* Does he not, by that single word, avow his trust in my honour, and his own disinterested attachment to me?"

Again he read the letter; it contained nothing which he might not show to Mr. Athelstone. There was not a word in it, excepting the declaration of reciprocal fidelity in that of the signature, which implied a confidence; and this implicit trust still more affected Louis. "Noble Wharton!" cried he; "this is Alexander, drinking the suspected bowl! —and you shall find that I am faithful, also!"

He sprang out of bed, and hastily dressed himself. But just as he was hurrying out of the door, with the letter in his hand, he paused. "Why should I be thus eager to put myself into purgatory?" He returned into the room. "My dear, good, but precise uncle," continued he, "cannot understand this man! He will find an argument to blame, in all that I admire, in this open, daring spirit.

But, at least, he must acknowledge that here he is no hypocritical designer! I will show it to him."

Louis continued to fluctuate amidst a variety of reflections and resolutions, till the bell for family morning prayers roused him from his indecisive meditations, and, putting the letter in his breast, he descended to the library.

When the duty was done, and he arose from his knees, he found the young Spaniard by his side; and rising from the same posture, which he had taken between him and Alice. Louis looked surprised: Ferdinand smiled; and without waiting to be questioned, said, "that the preceding night, he had enquired of Miss Coningsby what was meant by the vesper and matin bell, which rang after he and his father had withdrawn to rest, and before they appeared in the morning. She was so good as to explain it to him; and he had thus taken the liberty to join the family devotion." While the domestics were making their reverential bows to the Pastor, as they retired, Mrs. Coningsby observed her young guest. She expressed her pleasure at meeting him in so sacred an hour; "But you are not of the church of Calvin, nor of Luther?" asked she.

"No," replied he, "but I am of the church of their Master; and that, I trust, does not exclude me from yours!"

"That plea will open the gates of heaven to you!" cried the Pastor with a benign smile, as he passed from the reading-desk into the breakfast-room.

It was some time before the Marquis came from his chamber; but when he did join the morning group, being ignorant of his son having mingled in what he would have deemed an heretical rite, he contemplated that son's renovated appearance with comfort unalloyed. He could not account to himself how such a change from languor to activity, from despairing melancholy to gay cheerfulness, could have been wrought in the short space of two days; unless he might attribute it to the influence of the Saint, before whose defaced shrine he had knelt the preceding day, when he had wandered alone to the solitary abbey. While he sat absorbed in these thoughts, Mrs. Coningsby

mentioned to the younger part of the circle, what had been discussed the evening before, between herself and Mr. Athelstone.

As the season approached, when the family usually migrated to Morewick Hall; it was now proposed, they should move earlier; and, accompanied by their guests, make a tour through all the interesting scenery in its neighbourhood. "You will find the hall a more comfortable residence than this lonely rock," continued she, addressing the Marquis; "but Lindisfarne is my uncle's Patmos; and when here, he loves to live like a hermit in his cell."

"Rather," returned Ferdinand, with an answering smile, "like the privileged saint, emparadised with angels."

Louis guessed, that one view in this scheme, was to take him out of the way of the Duke; and with something between a sigh and a smile, in thinking the precaution was no longer necessary, he warmly seconded his aunt's proposal. The eyes of Alice and Ferdinand met in pleased sympathy. And Cornelia, addressing the Marquis, soon awakened an interest in him, he did not expect to find in the projected excursion. She talked to him of Alnwick; of its chivalrous trophies; and of the stone chair of Hotspur, which still overlooks its battlements. She then passed to the castle of Warkworth; and spoke of the anchorite's chapel, dug in the heart of its rock. As she discoursed of the hero of Holmedon, and narrated the sorrows of his friend, the devout penitent of the hermitage, her share of the Percy blood glowed on her cheek, and in her language; and the Marquis, aroused to all his military and religious enthusiasm, often grasped the cross of his sword, and mingled a prayer with the aspirations of a soldier.

Meanwhile, Alice enumerated to Ferdinand, the charming variety of their walks at Morewick; particularly along the meandering banks of the Coquet, and in view of the very hermitage, Cornelia was describing to his father. Ferdinand accepted with delight her promise of conducting him to the cell, by her own favourite path — a rough plank bridge, that joined the Morewick grounds to a little

woody island. In former times, one of its objects had formed a scene for the pencil of Verrio;—an old romantic mill, standing amongst the moss-grown trees, and dashing the foaming waters of its wheels over the pendent branches, which swept the flood beneath.

A little further on, behind the islet, the river ran clear and tranquil; and there, a boat paddled by the miller's son, she said, would soon convey them, under as deep a shade, to the opposite shore. From thence, by a winding walk, (traced in the wild wooded scenery by the hermit himself!) she would lead him over the rocky heights, to the cell; where, for sixty years, the mourning lover of murdered beauty had fed upon his tears day and night! "I know the pleasure with which Louis will accompany us," added she; "and if it be moonlight, he will like it better; for he often tells me, the garish hour of sunshine is no time for visiting the hermitage of Warkworth."

Louis did not hear what was passing, for he had chosen the opportunity of his uncle's guests being engaged in conversation with his cousins, to inform Mr. Athelstone that Duke Wharton had left Bamborough. When the good old man had read the Duke's letter, he pressed his nephew's hand as he returned it, and said with a playful smile, "It is well; and we will not grudge him his apotheosis!"

The remainder of the Sabbath passed in the Pastor's family, as became the purity of its master's faith, and the simplicity of his manners. At the usual hours for the public celebration of divine worship, he and his little household, all excepting his Roman Catholic guests, repaired to the parish church.

Towards the close of the afternoon service, (while the Marquis had again absented himself, and was retired to the interior ruins of the abbey,) Ferdinand placed himself at the window of his bed-chamber, which commanded a view of the church path, to watch the re-appearance of the only saint which now engaged his idolatry. With what pleasurable curiosity, excited by his sentiments for Alice, which gave him an interest in all that concerned her, did he see the massy oaken doors unfold from under the low Saxon arch, and the island train issue forth in their clean

but coarse Sunday attire! Four generations in one family first met his eye. A hale old fisherman, with grizzled locks, and a ruddy, though weather-ploughed cheek, supported on his sinewy arm the decent steps of his dame; who, dressed in a camlet gown of her own spinning, and a linen cap of spotless white, looked smilingly behind on the group that closely followed; — her athletic son, and his comely wife; each restraining the capering steps of a chubby boy and girl, as they led them forth from the house of God. The aged patriarch of the race, his head whitened by the winters of nearly a century, closed the procession; one hand leant on a staff, the other clasped the arm of his youngest grandchild, a pretty young woman, whose downcast eyes showed how cautiously she was guiding the faltering steps of her venerable grandsire. Of such simple and sincere worshippers as these, was the congregation of Lindisfarne; and, as Ferdinand observed their composed and happy countenances, he felt that theirs must be the religion of peace.

"Yes," cried he, "where innocence dwells, there must be genuine piety. Nothing is there to impede the free communion between earth and heaven. The blameless spirit does not fear to lift up its eyes in the presence of its Creator; it is still clothed in the brightness of His beams. But the guilty wretch — polluted — bereft! — Oh, what can hide his nakedness from the Omniscient eye? Not the unction of man.—I have had enough of that. What breath of mortal absolution can still this raging fire?" He smote his breast as he spoke, and tore himself from the window.

Mrs. Coningsby and her daughters had prepared tea in the drawing-room, a long time before the different members of her little circle drew their chairs around it. The Pastor was paying his customary Sabbath visitations to the infirm from age, sickness, or sorrow. Ferdinand was yet in his chamber; struggling with an agony of soul, more grievous than penance that priest ever inflicted. And Louis, having accompanied his uncle to the door of one of the fisher's huts, instead of returning home, walked on unconsciously, till he found himself in the cemetery of the

old monastery, and saw the Marquis approaching him from the western aisle.

Supposing his lordship had come there, merely from being an admirer of antiquity, Louis did not hesitate to join him; and entering into conversation on this idea, he began to point out the most perfect specimens of its ancient architecture; and to name the periods of British history they commemorated, as the times of the abbey's erection, enlargement, or repairing. As he was master of his subject, and spoke of the abbey's founders, Oswald and Aidan, with not merely historical accuracy, but reverence for their holy zeal, Santa Cruz pressed the hand of his companion; and attended with questioning complacency, till he almost forgot he was not listening to a good Catholic. He could not comprehend how a disciple of heresy could have more toleration for the professors of the Roman creed, than they had for heretical infidelity; and therefore, with a hope that the Catholic faith, which Baron de Ripperda had abjured, was latent in his son, the Marquis willingly gave way to the predilection he had conceived for him, and followed his explanatory steps, through the whole ruin. The devout Spaniard was now shown the place, where the mortal part of the exemplary Saint Aidan reposed; and he bowed, with the soul's homage, to the vacant spot, at the right side of the high altar, which had once contained the storied shrine of the holy Cuthbert. Louis conducted him to a cell, now choked with docks and nettles, which had once been the penitentiary of a King. Near this half-buried vault lay several flat crosiered tombstones, of different dates; and amongst them, two mitred brothers of the Barons of Athelstone and of Bamborough.

"You are nobly descended, Mr. de Montemar!" observed the Marquis: "by your mother's side, from these powerful Northumbrian Barons; by your father's, from the princely house of Nassau, and the more illustrious Ripperda of Andalusia. These were all faithful sons of the Cross! but now that their posterity have embraced the schisms of infidelity — oh, my ingenious young friend, are you not at this moment ready to exclaim, *How am I fallen!*"

"No, my lord," returned Louis; "I have too British a spirit, to regret the feudal power which was founded on the vassalage of my fellow-creatures. And, though my father may have forfeited all claim to the restitution of his paternal rights in Spain, by having become a proselyte to the religion in which I have been educated, I cannot deem any depression of rank a debasement, which is incurred in so sacred a cause."

Santa Cruz drew his arm from his companion. Such adherence to principle, had it been on his side of the argument, would have filled the Marquis with admiration; but, in the present case, it gave his growing partiality for the son of Ripperda so severe a shock, that he sunk into stern silence, and turned out of the abbey. Not a word was spoken during their walk homeward. And when they entered the Parsonage, the Marquis bowed coldly to the Pastor; while, with a similar air of reserve, he accepted the seat presented to him by the side of Mrs. Coningsby.

The whole party were now assembled; but an embarrassing gravity pervaded them all. None knew exactly how to explain it; but it arose rather from the several individuals thinking too intensely of each other, than from indifference to each other's society. Louis alone had straying thoughts; and they were wandering far and wide: — sometimes with his noble friend, throwing himself, in loyal gallantry, at the feet of a dethroned Queen and her Son. Then the image of his father, and of Spain, would occupy his mind. He seemed to be present with him in that country; where, though denied the honours of his race, the fame of his services proclaimed, that he did more than possess them — he deserved them! "I am not fallen," said Louis to himself; "when sprung from such a father! What is there in mere title or station, to render a man truly great? It is action that makes the post one of honour, or disgrace. — And, God of my fathers! give me but the opportunity to serve my country, and no man shall say the name of Ripperda has suffered degradation!"

Louis started from his chair, in the fulness of his emotion, and hastily crossed the room. He chanced to approach a recess near the bookcase.

"You are right to remind Cornelia of her duty!" cried the Pastor; "open the door; and she will then recollect, that nearly an hour has elapsed since she ought to have given us our Sunday's evening anthem."

Louis immediately obeyed, and throwing open a pair of small folding doors, discovered an organ, with the oratorios of Handel on its music-stand. Cornelia did not require a second command: — she took her seat before the instrument; and with tones that might —

"Create a soul under the ribs of death,"

sang the divine strains of "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

As the pealing organ swelled the note of praise, the Marquis almost imagined himself in his own oratory; and that he heard the seraphic voice of his daughter Marcella, chanting her evening hymn to the Virgin. Tears filled the father's eyes: he drew near the instrument; and, crossing his arms over his breast, with the silent responses of the heart, he re-echoed every word and every note of the holy song. When Cornelia struck its last triumphant chords, and was rising from her seat, he entreated her to prolong strains so well suited to the vesper hour, and the feelings with which he listened.

Mr. Athelstone joined in the request; remarking, that as he loved a peculiar consecration of the instruments of worship, he never permitted this organ to be opened but on the seventh day, or other holy festivals; and that, when it was once touched by his Saint Cecilia, his greatest pleasure was to hear its sounds, till the hour of night closed them in prayer.

Cornelia re-commenced, with the overture of the Messiah; and the evening ended in unison with the piety of her uncle and his guest—in hymns to the great Author of universal harmony.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morning of the 1st of October, if it were piercing as a flight of arrows, was as dazzling too; for the clearness of the atmosphere gave an unusual splendour to every object: and the larks that carolled high in the heavens seemed exulting in the brilliancy of their course. The exhilarating property of the air had its effect upon the party from the Parsonage; who gaily stepped into the boat that was to convey them to a creek on the opposite shore, a little below Bamborough. To touch at the Castle was out of the question; for no second flag of amnesty had yet passed between the angry Baronet and his quietly expectant nephew.

On landing they found horses, which the Pastor had sent forward at dawn; and mounting, in full confidence of the animals being accustomed to the rough roads in prospect, the happy group commenced the day's excursion. Nearly a week's sojourn in the island had blunted most of the Marquis's prejudices against the amiable followers of Luther whom he found there; and the familiar companionship of minds not essentially discordant had mingled them all into an intimacy almost amounting to friendship.

They proceeded along the minstrel banks of the Tweed, and by the romantic borders of the Till, to the falling towers of what once was royal Norham! Much food was there for memory and meditation. The friends wandered for several hours amongst its legendary ruins; and then pursued the *debateable* stream to Flodden Field. Another train of thought arose in the mind on that solitary track. Two centuries before, it had borne the bannered host of two hostile brother nations! It now lay a desert, as if curst by the kindred blood then spilt upon its soil.

Having treated the Marquis with a rustic dinner at a farm-house in Branxton, a pretty village * which stands a

* This place has a milder interest attached to it, in the minds of persons who know it to be the birth-place of the late Percival Stockdale; an author who united poetic genius with just criticisms in his beautiful work on the great poets of England. His remains lie in the chancel of the church of Branxton.

little to the north of that memorable field, Mrs. Coningsby and her highly gratified party re-embarked at the mouth of the Tweed. Before them lay a magnificent setting sun. As the little bark tracked its way through a flood of molten gold, Ferdinand leaned behind the bench that supported Alice, and in a soft under tone pursued the subjects which seemed most congenial to her youthful taste. Cornelia reclined near them, contemplating the receding shore, but listening to the Marquis, who sat between Louis and her mother, comparing with them the strange coincidence in the fates of James the Fourth of Scotland, Sebastian of Portugal, and Roderick of Spain; all of whose deaths were as doubtful as their disappearance was certain, from the fields of battle, where each lost his crown and existence to the world.

In these discourses time passed lightly, till the breeze wafted the happy party, under the rising moon, into the sheltered cove of Lindisfarne.

On entering the Parsonage, Mr. Athelstone presented a packet to the Marquis; and its contents put to flight all their ready plans for future rambles. It had been forwarded through Holland, and contained despatches from Spain, requiring the Marquis Santa Cruz's immediate return to Madrid, on an affair of great national importance.

Ferdinand turned pale at this intelligence.

"Oh, that your lordship would take me with you!" exclaimed Louis, impetuously. Mr. Athelstone interrupted him with a look. "Pardon me, sir," cried he; "but my father, — am I never to see my father?"

"When he wishes to see you. But you must not break upon his presence."

Louis said no more, but bowing to his uncle, with his heart full, hurried out of the room. The Marquis looked after him in silence.

Ferdinand had turned his despairing eyes on Alice, and saw her head bent on her bosom, with tears trickling down her cheeks. Those tears acted on his soul like dew on the parched earth, and, unconscious of the intention, he found himself at her side: he had taken her hand, he had murmured some indistinct sounds in her ear; but they suf-

fused her face with blushes; and, confused and agitated, she withdrew her hand, and glided out of sight, to a seat behind the window-curtain. Ferdinand followed her with his eyes; but while he exultingly felt that her pure image possessed him wholly, he shrunk from the recollection of how unworthy his transgressions had made him, of aspiring to the possession of so spotless a being. Nay, were it possible that penitence could so wash his stains away, as to restore him to the self-respect, which is indispensable to the manly character; and above all to the consciousness of him, who takes upon himself to be the protector, and the happiness of a virtuous woman; was he not aware, that even this blessed regeneration could not avail him here? He well knew, that his father's bigotry would sooner see him die, than allow him to perish, soul and body; which he would suppose must be the consequence, should he permit him to marry a daughter of the church of England. To acknowledge his sentiments for Alice to the Marquis, was only to call down his malediction on their object. And, under these circumstances, to reveal more of them to herself, than his surprised heart had already betrayed, seemed to him a base sacrifice to his own immediate gratification, at the expense of his honour and her future comfort. He was not so ill read in female character, as to be ignorant that he had made an impression on the heart of this heartless child of nature. No one present appeared to suspect what was passing in the bosoms of either. Could he, then, knowing that the bar was insuperable between him and her, could he act the double treachery of fastening affections, that must be hopeless, upon him; and make so ungrateful a return to the hospitality of her uncle and her mother, as to devote the youth of their beloved child to tears and disappointment? "No," said he to himself, "I will not load my already burdened soul with the guilt of rendering her unhappy; of having come hither on a demon's errand, to lay waste all that paradise of smiles! I deserve to go hence, as I came, a lonely, unregretted wretch."

While these thoughts were occupying the mind of Ferdinand, the Marquis was explaining to Mr. Athelstone, that he must abide by the letter of his sovereign's com-

mands; and not only relinquish the pleasure he had anticipated in visiting Morewick Hall, but take his leave even of the island, the following day. Finding this decision was not to be questioned, Mrs. Coningsby withdrew to give some necessary orders for her guest's early departure; and Alice, taking the opportunity of the opened door, hastily quitted the room. Cornelia, having expressed her sincere regret to Ferdinand, that they must lose his father and himself so soon, in a few minutes followed her mother.

The gracious spell of tranquil enjoyment, which an hour before had encircled them all, was now broken. Mrs. Coningsby hurried from place to place in hospitable bustle, ordering all kinds of travelling comforts to be put up for the service of their departing friends. The Marquis and the Pastor sat till a late hour, conversing in the library; but the young people continued dispersed, rather as if some cause of discord had fallen amongst them, than an order to separate hearts so well inclined to join. Once Alice had summoned courage to descend to the drawing-room; but, on entering, she saw no one there but Ferdinand, who was resting his head upon her harpsichord; and hastily retreating, she did not come down again till summoned to supper.

The ensuing morning's meal was passed like that of the preceding evening, by the younger part of the group, almost in silence. But when breakfast was over, Louis drew a letter from his pocket, and presenting it open to Mr. Athelstone, told him he had written that to his father, and he hoped the Marquis would have the goodness to take charge of it to Madrid. Santa Cruz bowed his acquiescence, and the Pastor perused the letter. As he ran his eye over its contents, he could not but admire the generous submission which had withheld the writer from even hinting the wish which so thoroughly possessed him.

"You have written like an affectionate son," said the Pastor, as he returned the letter; "but you have not dropped one word of what is so much at your heart. Why do you not ask your father's permission to pay your personal duty to him?"

"And you give me yours, dearest sir, to express that wish?"

"Certainly; and when the Baron's leisure will allow him to preside over his son's introduction to this perilous world, then, I doubt not, he will grant your petition, and I must resign you."

Louis gladly retired, to add as a postscript to his letter, what he had found so much difficulty in preventing himself from making its primary subject. The ladies had already withdrawn; and Ferdinand, seeing their waving gowns through the distant shrubbery in the garden, believed that, without any breach of his resolution, he might once more cool his feverish pulse with the breeze at their side; and for the last time soothe his disturbed soul by feeling himself near Alice, and listening to her tender accents.

The wish was no sooner formed than he was in their path. Mrs. Coningsby was not there. Cornelia was calmly gathering flowers to replenish her beaupots, and Alice was walking pensively towards the wicket that opened to the hill. Ferdinand followed her, and with a bound of joy he could not conceal from his better reason, saw her open the little gate, and pass through. A few sheep were cropping the grass on the pasture, and her favourite lamb frolicked before her. She did not notice the animal, but turned to the base of the hill. Ferdinand heard her draw a deep sigh, as she seemed to think herself removed from observation; and in an agitated voice she ejaculated his name. He required no more to be at her side,—at her feet. What he said he hardly knew; but he felt all his high resolves vanish, and that words failed under the impetuous declaration of his heart. Surprised at so unthought of a disclosure, and alarmed at a language and vehemence she had never known before, Alice would have fled; but he detained her with her hands clasped in his: and while he wept upon them in the wild emotions of his soul, her tears flowed also; and he wrought her to confess, that she had retired alone, to weep at his departure.

Ferdinand forgot all the wretched past, in the transport of that moment; and amidst the burning blushes of a timidity that trembled at every word she uttered, he drew from the guileless Alice all the secret of her heart. His dominant passion had again seized the rein; and clasping

her hands to his breast, he ardently implored her to pledge him her faith before the Supreme of Heaven; — that, however long might be his absence, she would never be persuaded to become the wife of any other man. Then growing in his demands on the tender girl, he conjured her to promise not to continue that "exquisite softness of manner to Mr. de Montemar, the sight of which had already more than half maddened him." With a glance, which shone like a shooting star over the dewy night, she gave him the solemn pledge he asked; and she smiled, when she made a promise she deemed so unnecessary. But both engagements were hardly pronounced by her ingenuous lips, before his ungovernable selfishness smote upon the conscience of her lover.

"Alice," cried he, "I am unworthy of your angelic nature. I know I do not deserve that you should even look upon me. But I cannot bid you retract your vow. It is that alone which saves me from despair: it is that alone which can support me in life till we meet again. Oh, Alice, you saw the wretch that came to this island, at war with himself, and sinking fast to an untimely grave! — You recalled me to existence! — You regenerated, and healed my broken heart! But my father, should he know I love you, he would separate us for ever."

Alice raised her eyes, drowned as they were in tears, and looked on him aghast. "Is his rank so very great?"

"That is not my fear," returned Ferdinand; "his rank is not higher than your own illustrious blood. But he is so rigid a Catholic; I too well know he would rather see his whole race extinct, than one of them married to a Protestant."

Poor Alice was now seized with a violent trembling, and turning deadly pale, leaned for support against a tree. Ferdinand pressed her cold hand. "But I am no bigot, my beloved Alice; and there is a circumstance connected with my family, which may have power to influence a happier fate. It shall be tried; and it is of such importance, I hardly doubt its success."

She revived at this assurance, and with deepened tenderness he resumed.

" Meanwhile, as we hoped to be blessed hereafter in an union as indissoluble as our love, forbear to disclose what has now passed between us, to any of your own family. They would communicate it to my father; and the consequence I seek to avert, must then inevitably follow; — an eternal separation."

The arguments of love, and the pleadings of despair, at last prevailed upon Alice to make this promise also. Her head was in a whirl of distracting thought. She had never known such distress as overwhelmed her, when, in making this second vow, she felt as if she had at once relinquished all her claims on the affection of her nearest relations; and saw the being, for whose sake she had made this boundless sacrifice, on the point of leaving her for an unlimited time, perhaps for ever!

Ferdinand beheld the agony of her soul, and too well guessed her apprehensions. Now he felt the mischief he had wrought; now he saw the ruin he had begun in that so lately happy bosom. He had not only awakened a passion there to feed upon her heart, but he had introduced the scorpions of an accusing conscience, where, only a few moments before, all was innocence and peace. " Wretch that I am!" cried he to himself; " to repay the blessing of thy tenderness with all this evil!"

But striving to soothe and to cheer her, he vowed to see her at all events early in the spring; and, at the feet of her mother and her uncle, implore their pardon, and consent to an eternal union. When she became a little composed, he besought a ringlet of her hair to console him in his lonely absence; and having pressed the trembling hand that bestowed it, to his heart and his lips, he allowed her to break from the clinging arms that vainly tried to withhold her. She rushed through the garden into the house; and locking herself within her own room, gave way to the anguish of her soul.

Ferdinand turned towards a remote winding of the cliffs, fuller of self-arraignment than of satisfaction; yet, though he detested the selfishness of his recent conduct, the headlong impulse he had yielded to his passion was too strong

to allow him to make the only restitution now in his power;—to release her from both her vows.

At noon the boat was announced, that was to bear the travellers to their carriage on the main land, which was to convey them to the place of embarkation for Spain. In the hurrying moments of departure, the absence of Alice was remarked by none but the heart of Ferdinand; and it yearned towards the sensibility which prevented her sharing these last adieus. He touched the cheeks of her mother and sister with an emotion they did not expect. He hastily embraced Louis; and putting the hand of the Pastor reverentially to his lips, hurried down the rocks to the beach.

The Marquis's farewell was more composed; but as he crossed the sands to the boat, he stopped, and gathering up a few of the entrochi, (he had heard called Saint Cuthbert's beads,) he bent his head to the grey towers of the monastery, and turning towards Mr. Athelstone, said with a smile, "These shall be my rosary, in grateful remembrance of this holy isle!"

The venerable Pastor answered him with a benediction. He saw the father and son embark; then stood with his silvered head bare to the wind, as he waved his handkerchief to the diminishing vessel; and breathed a prayer for the safety of its freight, in every movement of his uplifted hands.

If Louis ever felt a touch of envy, it was at the moment when the distant sail disappeared from the horizon; and as he slowly followed the homeward step of his uncle, he sighed to himself; "They will soon see my father!—They will understand all his glorious plans for the service of his restored country!—They will witness his honours!—While I —— down, my rebellious, my ungrateful spirit!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE remainder of the autumn was passed in Lindisfarne, by the different members of the Pastor's family, with no

change in the tranquil routine of their occupations, and little apparent alteration in themselves.

Sir Anthony had made ample apologies to his nephew, and concessions to his uncle, to justify a renewed reconciliation. He pleaded surprise and infatuation; and as the eccentric planet whose influence created both, had some time reached its perihelium, it was hoped the attraction would be too powerful to allow of its return. Mr. Athelstone, therefore, permitted his nephew to visit as usual at the Castle, till the closing in of winter rendered the shores dangerous, and commanded the emigration of his family to the more sheltered regions of Morewick Hall.

Louis's elastic mind, like the principle of life, shooting into every faculty of vigorous manhood, recovered all its spring; and allowing himself to think no more of his father nor of Duke Wharton, than what was sufficient to keep his emulation in active career to attain the patriotic talents of the one, and the disinterested enthusiasm of the other; he devoted himself, heart and soul, to the perfect acquirement of every branch of study which could possibly promote the great ends of his ambition. Accustomed to labour, the buoyancy of his spirit never admitted the touch of fatigue. Bodily exertion could not weary his practised limbs; nor diversity of mental pursuits distract nor overstrain his faculties. In the full power of health, and of a mind which care had never traversed, all things were easy to him. One hour he was absorbed in mathematics, history, or languages; and the next saw him in the chase, with his gun on the moor, or bounding along the icicled heights of Morewick, by the side of Cornelia.

Alice alone had exhibited a change in her person and manners since the visit of the noble Spaniards. She, who used to be the most constant companion of her cousin, now hardly ever joined him in his rambles, and always refused to be his partner in the evening dances, which usually diversified the amusements of the hall when any of the neighbouring families made a part of its winter fire-side. Her spirits and her bloom were gone; and Mrs. Coningsby at length became so alarmed, that she seriously talked with the Pastor about taking her in the spring to some milder cli-

mate. Louis was not insensible to the alteration in his cousin. But those anxious attentions which, in any former indisposition, she had always received from him with grateful affection, were now not merely avoided, but repelled with evident dislike. At first he attributed this strange conduct to some unintentional offence on his part, and he tenderly asked her if it were so. She burst into tears as she hurryingly replied in the negative, and left the room. On mentioning the circumstance to Mrs. Coningsby, it only confirmed her opinion of her daughter's illness being a latent consumption; and that her present distaste to what before gave her pleasure was a symptom of that fatal disorder.

Such was the state of the family, when, about four o'clock, one dreadfully severe day in December, a person of middle age and a gloomy aspect, alighted from a chaise at the door of Morewick Hall, and, almost speechless with cold, was ushered into the presence of Mr. Athelstone. The Pastor was alone in his library; and the stranger, in brief and broken English, announced himself as the Señor Castanos, confidential secretary to the Baron de Ripperda, and a messenger to the guardian of his son. While he spoke, he presented two packets; one from the Baron, the other from the Marquis Santa Cruz. With his accustomed hospitality, Mr. Athelstone bade his guest welcome; and was enquiring after the health of the Baron and the Marquis, when Louis entered the room.

"My child," said the Pastor, "I believe you are near the goal of your wishes. This gentleman comes from your father."

The secretary bowed to the son of his patron; and Louis, looking first at him and then at his uncle, exclaimed, "My father! and does he——?" He hesitated — he stopped: the eagerness of his hopes interrupted his articulation.

"We will open this packet and see," returned the Pastor, taking that from the Baron into his hand. But, glancing at the shivering figure of his guest, who had drawn near the fire, he did not break the seal; but desiring Louis to ring the bell, requested the Señor to permit the servant

to show him to an apartment, where he should have proper attendance, after so inclement a journey.

As soon as the Spaniard had withdrawn, Mr. Athelstone opened the packet: it presented one for himself, and another for his nephew. Never before had Louis received a letter, directed to himself, from his father. Though he always persevered in the duty of addressing his only parent, yet, until this moment, the answers were never more than acknowledging messages, through his guardian. It was, therefore, with a peculiar feeling of recognition, — a conviction of being now owned by his father's heart as his son, — that Louis opened the first letter he had ever received from his hand.

Its contents were these: —

"My dear Son,

"I hear from the Marquis Santa Cruz that you are worthy the name you bear; that your acquirements do credit to the liberality of your education; and that you are not deficient in ambition to bring these implements to the test. I offer you an opportunity. Accompany the bearer of this to the Continent. He is my secretary, and has my commands to present you to a person there who will put your talents to the trial. Should the result be to your honour, you shall not be long withheld from the embrace of your father,

"WILLIAM,
"Baron de Ripperda.

"Madrid,
November, 1725."

Louis pressed these welcome commands to his lips; then turning to communicate their happy tidings to Mr. Athelstone, he saw the eyes of the venerable man still bent on the other packet, while the spectacles which he held in his hand bore tearful proofs how little was his sympathy with the joy that beat in the heart of his nephew. Louis took that trembling hand, and kissed it without speaking.

"I know, my child, that you are going to leave me, — I know that you are glad to go; and it is natural: but an old man's tears are natural too."

Louis grieved for the grief of his uncle. He anticipated

his own pangs in the moment of separation from so paternal a friend, — from an aunt and cousins so beloved; but he did not feel a wish to escape those pangs an hour by delaying the journey that was to draw him nearer to his father, and to the indistinct, but, he hoped, sure objects of his long-cherished ambition. He was, indeed, drawn by two attractions, — the one tender and persuading, the other powerful and imperative; and his soul leaped to the latter, as to its congenial element.

In a few minutes Mr. Athelstone recovered his wonted serenity. "The time is now come," said he, "when I must put forth from my bosom the sacred deposit I have so fondly cherished. Yes, Louis; your spirit, more than your years, demands its active destination; and I will not murmur that the moment for which I have educated your mind and your body is at last arrived." He then read aloud, and with composure, the letter which the Baron had addressed to him; but it was not more explanatory than the other of the circumstances in which he meant to place his son.

The secretary re-entered. On Mr. Athelstone putting some civil questions to him respecting his present fatigue and his late long journey, he abruptly answered, "That as his arrival had been delayed by contrary winds, and the severity of the season did not promise a more propitious voyage in returning, it would be necessary for him and Mr. de Montemar to take leave of Morewick Hall the following morning."

The Baron's letter to Mr. Athelstone told him that Louis must yield implicit deference to the arrangements of Castanos; and in reply to some remonstrance from the Pastor, for a less hasty departure, the Señor coldly observed, "That at Ostend he and his charge were to meet their order of route; and should they arrive there a day later than the one fixed by the Baron, the consequence might be fatal to their safety. Indeed, that no appendage might encumber their progress, his lord had commanded him to deny to Mr. de Montemar the indulgence of taking a servant from England."

Mr. Athelstone made many enquiries, to gather something of the object of so peremptory a summons; but he

received no satisfaction from the secretary, who, with even morose brevity, continued to affirm his total ignorance of what was to follow the introduction of his charge to his new guardian. His own office went no further than to conduct Mr. de Montemar, by a particular day, to the Continent; but whom he was to meet there, or how he was to be employed, future events must explain. The frank-hearted Pastor became uneasy at this mystery; and the more so, as, from the secretary's hint (which he appeared vexed at having dropped), it seemed connected with danger. "Yet it is his father who summons him into such circumstances!" said the good man to himself; "and surely I may trust a father's watchfulness over his only son!"

Louis's imagination had taken fire at what chilled the heart of his uncle. That there was a demand on his courage in the proposed trial, swelled his youthful breast with exultation. "As yet," thought he, "I have tried my strength like a boy only, in exercise or in pastime!" He wanted to grapple with danger with the heart and the arm of a man, and for a cause that would sanctify the hazard of his life. "And to something like this," cried he mentally, "my father calls me! He calls me, as becomes the son of his race, to share the labours, the perils, of his glorious career! I am now to prove my claim to so noble a birthright; and I will prove it. O gracious Heaven! give me but to deserve honour of my father, and I ask no other blessing on this side of eternity!"

Mr. Athelstone saw that strong emotions were agitating the occupied mind of his nephew; and reading their import in the lofty expressions of his countenance, he did not check their impulse, by recalling his attention to present objects; but proceeded in silence to open the packet from Santa Cruz; hoping that its contents might cast a light upon the destiny of Louis.

The letter was short; chiefly thanking the Pastor and his family, for their kindness to himself and his son during their visit at Lindisfarne. Writing of Ferdinand, he added, that his health was materially improved, though his spirits continued unequal. To eradicate these remains of

indisposition, he meant to engage him in active service, should the present dispute between Austria and Spain (commenced on a question of commercial prerogative) lead to open hostilities. The Marquis concluded his letter, by saying, that he enclosed three packets from Don Ferdinand, as offerings of respect to the ladies of Lindisfarne.

Mr. Athelstone believed he had now found a clue to the affair of danger, to which Louis was to be introduced. He did not doubt that the Baron meant to engage his son also in the anticipated warfare between their Catholic and Cæsarian Majesties. The halting at Ostend seemed to corroborate this surmise; its new commercial company being the very subject in discussion between the rival powers. But still the immediate peril which threatened any delay in arriving there, remained as unexplained as before.

When Louis perused the Marquis's letter, he also supposed he was called to a military life; and as that was the point to which he had most wistfully directed his glory-attracted eye, the intimation at once fixed his vague anticipations; and rising from his seat, while his thoughts glanced on Wharton's gay demand *to write man upon his brow*, he smiled on his uncle, and said, "This is the *toga virilis* that has ever been the object of my vows!"

"God grant," cried the Pastor, mournfully returning his playful smile, "that it may not be steeped in blood!"

"And if found in the bed of honour," replied Louis, "I should not rest the worse for it!"

"You sport, my child, with these gloomy suggestions; and may you ever have the same cause for smiling at the advance of death! I know the passion of your soul to be always in the path of duty; and that in such pursuit, the rugged and the smooth, the safe or dangerous, are to you alike. Nourish this principle as that of your part in the covenant of your salvation. But keep a clear eye in discerning between duty and inclination. Remember, that no enterprise is great that is not morally good; that war is murder, when it commences in aggression; and that policy is villany, when it seeks to aggrandize by injustice. In short, in whatever you do, consider the aim of your action,

and your motive in undertaking its accomplishment. Be single-minded in all things, having the principle of the divine laws, delivered by the Son of God himself, as the living spring of every action throughout your life. Then, my Louis, you may smile in life and in death! You will be above the breath of man, beyond his power to disappoint you in your reward; for it will abide with you, in the consciousness of virtue, and a sure hope of eternal glory."

While the Pastor was yet speaking, Mrs. Coningsby and her daughters entered from a Christmas visit they had been paying in the neighbouring town of Warkworth. They started at sight of a stranger dozing in the great chair by the fire. Overcome with fatigue, Castanos had fallen asleep almost immediately after he had given his last unsatisfactory reply. The entrance of the ladies roused him, and he got up heavily from his seat, when Mr. Athelstone presented him to his niece, and briefly told his errand. Surprise at the suddenness of the summons, and dismay at parting with a companion so dear, overcame Mrs. Coningsby, and she sunk into a chair. Tears stole down the cheeks of Cornelia; and Alice stood motionless, pale, and silent.

After these first emotions had a little subsided, Mr. Athelstone, anxious to divert their thoughts, presented Don Ferdinand's three packets; and repeating the young Spaniard's request, that each lady would inspect her present alone, he added his own wish, that they would indulge the donor now. The hint was immediately adopted, for Mrs. Coningsby understood its purport. Divining her uncle's tenderness for the sensibility of his nieces, she left him to discuss with Louis the many arrangements necessary to a separation, which might be final to most of the party.

The remainder of the day was hardly long enough for the preparations each inmate of the hall was solicitous to produce, to render the journey and voyage of their beloved Louis as free of privations as possible. In the consequent bustle, no time was allowed for dwelling on its occasion, or giving way to the regrets which often turned the heart faint in the midst of the body's exertions. "To-morrow,

in the hour of parting, we will indulge our sorrow. We will then show our Louis our love, and our grief at the separation!" With these thoughts, Mrs. Coningsby and Cornelia stilled their often-rising emotions; while Mr. Athelstone, reading in the feverish activity of their services what was passing in their minds, meditated how to spare them and his nephew the agitating hour they anticipated.

When the family parted for the night, it was settled that Louis and his foreign conductor should not leave the hall the next morning until after breakfast; and therefore they should all meet again round that dear domestic table; and there exchange the dreaded word, farewell. Mrs. Coningsby observed, that before she slept, she must write a few lines to thank Don Ferdinand for the fine Moorish shawls, his gratitude had presented to herself and her daughters; and she would give the letter to Louis in the morning. Then, as was the custom in this affectionate family, on retiring to their rooms, he touched the cheek of his aunt with his lips, and shook hands with his cousins, when he bade God bless them.

With a body unwearied, and a mind too excited to admit of any sleep this night, he was passing to his apartment, when his uncle opened the door of his own chamber and beckoned him in. The venerable man there informed him, that he alone of all the family would bid him farewell the next morning. That he feared the fortitude of Mrs. Coningsby, and his nieces, in so severe a trial; and had therefore made arrangements to prevent it. Louis listened with gratitude, though with brimming eyes, to the good old man's account of his having ordered the travelling chaise to be at the lodge-gate by daybreak; and that he had prepared Señor Castanos to be ready at so unexpected an hour; and to permit his charge to see his maternal uncle, before they set sail. In the usual routine of his movements, Sir Anthony had been some time at Athelstone manor, where he always opened his Christmas hospitalities. As that mansion was on the banks of the Tyne, not far from Newcastle, where the travellers were to embark, his nephew would have an opportunity of paying his parting

duty without impeding his journey by going out of the way.

Louis left his kind guardian, with a promise of attending to the first tap at his door next morning; and in a more pensive mood proceeded to his dressing-room. On opening the door, he saw Alice seated by his table. Her lamp stood beside her; and its faint light gleamed upon her pallid features. He started with astonishment; for she had so long estranged herself from his slightest attentions, that Alice was the last person he could have expected to find at such a moment in his apartment. However, he approached her tenderly. On seeing him, she buried her head in the cushions of the chair, and evidently wept, though silently; for as he spoke, and soothed her, (though vaguely, as he could not guess the reason of this solitary visit,) he felt the tears trickle through her fingers on his hand. At last she was able to command her speech, though she still concealed her face; and when she did find utterance, it was some time before she dared touch upon the secret that preyed upon her peace and her life. She told him she was miserable; that her health was consuming under a sense of her deception to the best of mothers, of sisters, and of guardians; and unless she did seize this, her last opportunity of unburthening her soul to the only friend to whom she could do so, without breaking a fatal vow, she felt that she must die; she could not exist much longer under the tortures of her conscience, and the miseries of her heart.

Amazed, and alarmed, Louis listened to her, tried to calm her, and encouraged her to repose a full confidence in him. At length, amidst paroxysms of tears, and agonies of shame, she narrated all that had passed between herself and Don Ferdinand; adding, that since she had made him the guilty vow of concealing their attachment from those who ought to know all her thoughts, she had never known a moment's happiness.

Louis was struck dumb with this recital. The brevity of her acquaintance with Don Ferdinand, might yet be long enough to allow his accomplished manners and interesting state to make an impression on so young and

sympathising a heart; she therefore found a ready excuse with her cousin. But what was he to think of Don Ferdinand? Of the advantage he had taken of her tender and guileless nature, to betray her into a confession and a vow, so sure to sacrifice her peace; and which could bring no gratification to him, but the disgraceful consciousness of a triumph to his vanity!

Louis's fixed silence, while occupied in these thoughts, struck Alice like the voice of condemnation. She gazed distractedly in his face, and exclaimed in despair, "You think I am unpardonable. You think I deserve to die, miserable and unforgiven! Oh, wretched, guilty Alice,—break, break your heart, for there is none to pity you!" As she uttered this, in a hardly articulate voice, she threw herself back into her chair, sobbing and wringing her hands in bitter anguish. The violence of her emotions recalled Louis to recollection, and soothing her excessive remorse with every palliative that affection could suggest, he at last succeeded in restoring her to some degree of composure.

She told him, that her purpose in revealing her wretched story to him at this time, was not merely to unburthen her loaded soul; but to prevail on him to convey a letter to Ferdinand, in which she had implored him to release her from her guilty vow of concealment. "I have warned him," continued she, "that if he hold me to this impious pledge, it will not be for long; for I cannot live in my present self-abhorring condition. But, should my life be lengthened under these circumstances, to be my punishment, I will never consent to see his face again, till he has released me from so sinful an engagement."

Louis warmly applauded her resolution.

"Do not praise me," cried she; "do not call it resolution. I am unworthy of approbation for any thing. I do not resolve; I only feel that can I know no happiness, endure no person, but continue to detest myself, till this guilt be taken from my mind, by a full confession, and prayer for my mother's pardon."

Alice showed a letter, which had come in the packet directed to her by Ferdinand, and which he had secured her receiving free from observation, by his apparently

whimsical request that each lady would inspect her present alone. The letter contained protestations of inviolable attachment; petitions for her constancy; and exhortations to keep their secret, till the success of the plan he had in view brought him again to her feet. He had enclosed a miniature of himself, in the shawl which was his ostensible present to her. "I will never look on it again," said she, "till he remove from himself the guilt of holding me in this wicked undutifulness to my family."

Louis engaged, should he not meet him at Madrid, to forward her letter to Don Ferdinand, and to enclose it in one from himself, giving his thoughts on the subject, as became his relationship to her, and fraternal regard for her happiness. He assured her, he would write with a scrupulous attention not to irritate the feelings, which had excited her lover to deprive him of her sisterly affection. Aware that her self-accusing state of mind could not bear up against the representation he would fain have made of Ferdinand's entire selfishness in binding her, Louis contented himself with advising Alice (as a restitution she owed to her family, for all the misery her melancholy and illness had made them suffer) to dismiss as much as possible all painful retrospections; and to console herself with the conviction that she was now re-treading her steps to the path of duty. "Cheer yourself with this thought," said he, "till the tidings shall arrive which will take the seal from your lips. Then you may confess all; and reconciled, by pardon, to your family and yourself, you will again become the happy Alice."

She wept as he spoke. But it was no more the stormy grief of despair; she shed the balmy tears of penitence and hope. It was the genial shower upon the thirsty ground. "You have spoken comfort to me, Louis. I have not been so happy, since the dawn of the fatal morning, when my impious adjuration called down these months of misery upon my wretched head. Oh, if Ferdinand could have guessed this, would he have denied me such a comforter!"

Louis gently reminded her, that she must seek a comforter in a Superior Being; and in the exertions of her own mind: "You have ever, my Alice," said he, "been

the idol of your family; and, even to this day, they support you with a watchfulness, as if you were still in infancy: yet, you see, how inadequate has been all this anxiety to preserve you from error, and its consequent sorrows! By experience, you must now feel, that the care of the tenderest relations can be of no permanent effect, unless you assist it with your own circumspection and strength. Look not for comfort from one side or another, till you have found its principle in your own bosom; that is to say, till you resolve to act according to your duty. And this is, not merely to grieve over your fault, and yearn to confess it and be forgiven; but to lay a restraint upon your sensibility, and the violence of your regrets; and from this hour to devote the whole of your mind to the re-establishment of happiness in your family. Return to your former occupations. Meditate less upon Don Ferdinand and yourself; and think more of your mother, your sister, and your guardian. For their sakes, try to be cheerful, and you will be so. In one word, my dearest Alice, remember, that to perform our duty in this world, we must sustain our own virtue, and not habituate ourselves to the uncertain support of others."

"Why, my dear Louis, have I never heard these sentiments before? With such forewarning, I should never have erred."

"You might have heard them often; for my uncle has frequently talked to me in this way in your presence. But my sweet Alice was not then awakened to such subjects. You regarded them as grave discourses, in which you could be as little interested as in the map of a country you never intended to visit."

"And I went astray in that very country!" cried she; "simpleton that I was; always to turn away from every thing but the pursuits of a child!"

She was anxious to engage Louis to correspond with her; but as he could not write any thing to her that would not pass under the eye of the whole family, he told her she had best rest satisfied with his exertions for her release; and when he had obtained it from Don Ferdinand, he would then write openly, and tell her all his thoughts on an affair so momentous to her present and future happiness.

The hall clock struck one.

Alice rose: she put his hand to her lips, and smiled through her tears:—"I cannot be at this morning's breakfast.—But now—dear, dear, Louis—best of friends—farewell!"—Her head dropped upon his shoulder, where she struggled with two or three convulsive sobs. He pressed her to his heart, and in vain tried to repel the tears which started to his eyes: they flowed over her face as he supported her trembling steps to the door of her apartment. When he had brought her to the threshold, she uttered a breathless *God bless you!* and, breaking from his arms, threw herself into the room. The door was closed:—he heard her sob:—but tearing himself away, he returned with a heavy load at his heart to his own chamber.

CHAPTER X.

The silver gleams of a winter morning streaked the horizon, as the chaise which conveyed Louis de Montemar from the friends of his youth, mounted the heights of Warkworth, and gave him a last glimpse of Morewick Hall, lying in its shroud of mist at the bottom of the valley. The smoke of his uncle's chimney, beside which he had just received that venerable man's parting embrace and blessing, was mingling its dark volumes with the ascending vapours. A bleak and gusty wind tossed their white billows around the ancient pinnacles of the building; but no smoke arose from any other chimney!—There was no opened window-shutter; no sign of any other of the dear inhabitants being awake. The good old man was then weeping alone, and mingling with his tears the earnest prayer of solicitude for the preservation of his beloved nephew!

"And the prayer of the righteous availeth much!" said Louis to himself, fixing his eyes on the golden disk, just peeping above the distant rim of the ocean: "lovers have preserved their constancy, by a promise that each would

remember the other when the sun set or rose! and when I look on yon rising or setting orb, shall I not remember, that at those hours my venerable uncle is on his knees to Heaven, for the conservation of my constancy to a better love than that of a woman?"

As the turning of his carriage down an abrupt declivity snatched the whole of the vale of Coquet from his view, Louis thought of his aunt and Cornelia; how, in another hour, they would be looking in vain for his entrance into the breakfast parlour: and, what would be the burst of their grief, when they should be told that he was gone; that he had found the heart to leave them without one affectionate farewell! He almost regretted that he had spared himself and them a pang, which, he began to think, would have been more tolerable than the idea they might entertain, that a passion for novelty had rendered him neglectful of their parting tenderness. The wan countenance and piteous accents of Alice next presented themselves to his imagination; and, painful as were many of his thoughts connected with her recent disclosure, he could not but rejoice that her timely remorse, and as critical a resolution, had afforded him an opportunity to make his last act in the home of his youth, one that would eventually repay his vast debt of gratitude to her mother.

These reflections, accompanied him over many a moorland track caverned with coal-mines; and at night, the gleaming fires round the pits, with their wandering vapoury lights, lit him along moor and fell, till the sulphurous cloud, which usually canopies the city of Newcastle, received his vehicle. It then whirled down the steep hill into the town.

At Athelstone manor, a few miles south of the city, he met his uncle Sir Anthony; and, as he expected, had to listen to many a rough remonstrance against obedience to so abrupt a summons. Louis did not use much argument in replies, the reasoning of which, good or bad, he knew would be equally disregarded; but with assurances, that neither distance nor time should lessen his affection for the friends he left behind, he sought to dissipate his uncle's thoughts from the subject of debate; and so far succeeded, as to pass the remainder of the day with him in tolerable

cheerfulness. But when the captain of the vessel, that was to convey the travellers to Ostend, appeared at the manor, to announce that the wind served, and the ship was ready to sail; the newly restored good humour of the baronet was put to the proof: and it did not stand the trial. He burst into invectives against the Baron, for reclaiming his son; against the Pastor, for admitting his authority; and poured forth a torrent of reproaches on his nephew, for so readily consenting to quit relations, who loved and honoured him, to become dependent on the caprices of a father, who seemed to consider himself rather the patron than the parent of his son.

Louis saw it would be vain to reason with this violence; and that all he could do was to take a grateful and steady leave of his uncle. Sir Anthony clung to him, mingling entreaties for his stay, with upbraidings for his departure. And amidst vows of entailing all on him, if he would remain; and oaths to cut him off with a shilling, if he persisted to go, Louis tore himself away; leaving his uncle in an agony of grief and exasperation, in the arms of his servants.

Distressed by the outrageous emotions of Sir Anthony, so different from the chastised feelings of the Pastor, whose profound affections smoothed by their fulness the rising sorrow of the parting moment, Louis found a refuge, though a dreary one, in the solitude of his cabin. He sat for some hours, alone and silent, in the increasing gloom. The evening gun fired from the fort at the mouth of the harbour; and in a few minutes Castanos appeared with a lamp. He set it on the table, and, without remark, threw himself into the berth appropriated to his use. Louis was not in a mood to desire companionship; and with little more than a gracious word or two of thanks to the civilities of the captain and his mate, as they stepped in at intervals to enquire how he fared, he passed the remainder of the night.

Next morning, at dawn, when he pressed his repeater, and counted the hour, he calculated that if the breeze had continued, his vessel must now be far from the coast; and fearing to lose a last look of the shore where he first

remembered consciousness of being, and where he had imbibed, from friends dear to his heart, all the valued impulses of his soul, he sprang from the cot on which he lay, and stepped upon deck. The lonely helmsman was at his post, gazing at the stars, and steering slowly to leeward. To windward, stretched darkly along the horizon, lay the embattled cliffs of Northumberland.

"Majestic England!" said he, as he turned towards them; "how do thy lofty rocks declare thy noble nature! There, liberty has stationed her throne; there, virtue builds her altar; and there, peace has planted her groves! I leave thee to prove myself worthy of being thy adopted son. I go far away, to send a good report to the dear friends slumbering behind thy promontories. England, beloved, honoured! Where shall I find a country like thee? Will gorgeous Spain be to me, what thy simple glades have been?" He smiled at his own soliloquy.

"I go not to luxurious groves, to gorgeous indolence," cried he: "my errand is to the arena of populous cities; to win, or lose myself, in the Olympic struggles of man with man."

Louis forgot the receding shores of his country, and its beloved inhabitants, in the ideas these images suggested; and, forgetful alike of the wintery blast, he only drew his thick cloak closer around him; and, cradled in the coiled rope of the anchor, with his eyes half closed, he continued to muse on his future destiny: dreaming of martial achievements, and a succession of visionary triumphs, till the bright phantoms were lost in the chaos of sound sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

A PROSPEROUS voyage brought the travellers safely to Ostend. Castanos found the instructions he expected: and he informed his charge, that his lord's commands were, they should proceed immediately to the metropolis

of Germany; for there Louis was to meet his father's friend. Surprised, but not displeased at so extraordinary a route, his impatient son cheerfully set forward; and did not permit the curiosity natural to his thirst for knowledge to detain him a moment in any of the countries through which he travelled.

On a dark evening in January he and his guide arrived at Vienna. The streets were in so profound a gloom, Louis could not have guessed he was now in one of the most magnificent capitals of the world, had he not received some intimation of its greatness, by the extent of pavement he went over, from the point of the town at which he entered, to that which was to be his destination. As he drove along, he perceived some other proofs, that he was indeed in the modern Cæsarean metropolis. He passed noble houses, whose open gates showed they were superbly illuminated, and whence proceeded strains of gay music, that gave sign of life and festivity within. Castanos remarked, that these were palaces of the nobility. Exhilarated by the splendour of the lights, Louis enquired whether the house he was going to, promised as much consolation after a tedious journey. "But I flatter myself it will," added he, "from what I understand of the general rank of my father's friends."

"As the Baron de Ripperda is a nobleman of an universal acquaintance," replied Castanos, "he has friends of every rank, in every country."

In this instance, as in others, Louis saw he could get nothing satisfactory from his companion; and aware that a little patience must explain whither he was going, and what was to be his errand, he asked no more questions. As his carriage passed out of the brilliant halo which surrounded the immediate vicinity of these palaces, it seemed to enter the regions of tenfold night; so severe was the contrast, from full illumination to rayless darkness.

After an intricate drive of another half hour, the wheels no longer rattled on pavement, but turning abruptly down a narrow turfy lane, the leafless branches of its trees brushed across the carriage windows, as it jolted onward over a very rough road. A speck of light appeared in the

extreme distance. As the heavy vehicle rumbled forward, the light seemed to increase in size, and Louis soon after perceived it to be a flambeau held in the hand of a man. When the carriage approached, this person opened a pair of large iron gates, under a high archway, through which the travellers immediately passed. All around was dark, vast, and dreary; not even a single lamp chased the deep shadows from a court-yard of immense extent.

The man mounted the steps of a huge black building, sufficiently capacious for a palace, but gloomy enough to be a prison. Louis followed Castanos, and the flambeau-bearer, across a large cold hall; up a wide staircase, mildewed and crazy; and through a long echoing gallery, into a saloon, the distant extremities of which, like the outer court, were lost in deep shadow. A pair of wax lights, flaring in the wind, stood upon a great claw table, whose once gilded surface was now browned by time and neglect. Little more furniture was visible than a couple of chairs of similar fabric; two or three gigantic pier glasses, reflecting the persons in the apartment in ghost-like obscurity; and a brasier of newly kindled fuel, sluggishly glimmering on the hearth.

Louis started at a reception so different from the cordial comforts of Morewick Hall; so different from the social welcome of Athelstone manor; so dismally different from the anticipated magnificence of a palace at Vienna, and the hospitable greeting of his father's friend! He paused at the threshold; then smiling at the effeminacy of his disgust, entered, light of foot and of heart, saying to himself, "Do I shrink at so poor a trial of my spirit? My father has guessed the sin of my breeding; and thus disciplines the spoiled boy."

Louis might have been wearied, body and mind. He had travelled, since the moment of his landing, without other sleep than that he had caught by snatches in his indefatigable vehicle. He might have been hungry, for he had tasted nothing since the break of day. But he felt none of these wants of nature, in his eagerness to meet, if not his father, his father's representative, and to receive from him that father's commands.

When Louis entered the saloon, and so far took possession of its dismal hospitality, as to lay his hat and sword upon the table; Castanos called his attendant by the name of Gerard, and, whispering to him, they withdrew together. Louis sat for some time, expecting the re-entrance of the Spaniard, but no one appeared. He looked at his watch; it was near ten o'clock. From the hour, he supposed the taciturn secretary was staying away, in his usual care of supper; and that he would presently return, with his omelet.

Louis sat composedly, ten minutes after ten minutes; but at last, his impatience to know, why he was brought to so deserted an abode, and who he was to see there, got the better of his determination to quietly await events, and he rose to ring the bell. He took one of the candles, to seek for this indispensable piece of furniture; but in no corner of the grim-visaged tapestry could he find even its remains. He opened the door, and called Castanos. No voice made answer, but the dull vibration of his own from the numerous vacant apartments. With the candle in his hand, he retraced his way to the great hall, still calling on Castanos, and then on Gerard; but with as little success.

Determined to find somebody, he turned down a paved passage, to the quarter that seemed to lead to the offices. Not a living creature presented itself; and all doors which appeared likely to open to the air, were padlocked, and beyond his attempts to force. He returned to the hall, to examine the great door; and found it unbolted, but locked, and the key taken away. He now comprehended that Castanos, and the only apparent inmate of the house, had left the place; that he was alone, and fastened in; but for what purpose he was thus betrayed into solitary confinement, time only could declare. To quell the vague alarm that rose in his breast, he had again to recollect, he was brought into these circumstances by his father's orders.

"But at any rate," thought he, "whether I am to meet friend or foe, there is no harm in keeping my sword at my side. It is just possible Castanos may not be honest. He may not hold the rank in my father's establishment, which he pretends; he may not be the very Castanos;

should he be a menial domestic, instead of a confidential secretary, (and from his avoiding my presence at all opportunities, and being so unwilling to converse when obliged to be with me, it does not appear very doubtful;) then I may, indeed, be in the hands of a villain. He knows the generosity of my two uncles has made me a no contemptible object for plunder; and——in short, I do not like appearances!"

With these ideas, he hastily re-ascended the stairs, to the saloon. He found his sword safe, and lost no time in returning it to his belt. "What," cried he, "would be the reproaches of Sir Anthony, could he guess my present situation? What the distress at dear Morewick, did they know that their Louis, for the first time in his life, now feels the touch of fear?"

Murder in this loneliness — to die under the hands of ruffians, and be no more heard of by the beings he loved best—haunted his imagination while he walked to and fro, examining again and again the locks of his pistols. He had one in his hand, when he heard the rumbling of wheels in the court-yard. Shortly after, the steps of a man sounded in the gallery, and the saloon door being open, Louis saw Castanos approaching with his usual slowness. He entered the apartment, and laid a letter on the table.

"For me?" said Louis; "from whom?"

"Its contents will tell you, Señor."

When Louis glanced on the superscription, he saw it was the handwriting of his father. While he broke the seal, Castanos disappeared again. The letter was as follows: —

"My dear Louis! — This welcomes you to Vienna; and, if you conduct yourself as I hope, it welcomes you also to me and to the world! It was the dying injunction of your mother, to her father, that you should be brought up to honour me with a double duty. You can never forget the contents of the letter, which she wrote to her infant son from her death-bed, and which your uncle Richard was to open to you on your twelfth birthday?

It told you, to love your father as she had done; and to commit yourself in all things to his guidance.

"You are now called upon to act by this sacred exhortation. To be obedient in love and in fear, to a parent who received her legacy of tenderness for you in his own bosom, and who will hereafter pay it with interest from his heart.

"Now that she is gone, you are the only creature existing, with whom I can identify my own being; that is, communicate my thoughts and my actions without reserve. Your interest is my interest: and till time and experience have given you judgment to guide your own proceedings, my judgment must be yours. You are yet a boy in years; though a manly person, and, I understand, a mind of no common capacity, give you at twenty the appearance of maturity. But remember, it is appearance only. Talents and good dispositions are the implements of wisdom, not wisdom's self; she is born of time and experience, and shows her proof in hard probation. The scenes in which you have hitherto been an actor, amongst the simple inhabitants of a remote province in England, are child's play to the parts you may now be called to perform. I am about to present you to the world, to aspiring, subtle, treacherous mankind! You must be instructed in every movement, prompted, and supported. I have provided means to these ends; and all you have to do, is to resign yourself with docility to the masters I set over you. Should impertinent curiosity, or refractory wilfulness, or any other perversity in your conduct, traverse my present trial of your character, we never meet! You shall return whence you came; and only as one dead, hold a place in the memory of your father. The child of my spotless wife shall not be denied an ample provision; but I will never cherish as my son, one who is an alien to my spirit.

"On the night of your arrival at Vienna, Castanos has my commands to introduce you to a person, who will give proof of coming from me, by showing you a duplicate of that picture of your mother, which your grandfather bequeathed to me. Being so assured, you must revere and

obey that person, in word and deed, as you would revere and obey me; and ever hope to behold the face of your father, WILLIAM,

" Madrid. Baron de Ripperda."

There were family references in this letter, which affected the heart of a son;—and though the style was generally severe, yet there was also a promise of such full future confidence, that Louis could not but press it to his lips, as the earnest of a fellowship with his father, he was determined to deserve. The first sight of the letter had removed all suspicion of his guide from his mind: and having read it with a beating heart, he walked up and down the room, impatiently awaiting the introduction of his father's friend.

Again he heard the approach of steps; but it was now of two persons. He stopped in the middle of the floor, his eyes riveted to the door, which, in a few minutes was thrown open by Castanos; and a man of a commanding stature, wrapped in a cloak, and with a large hat flapped over his brows, entered alone into the chamber. The door was immediately closed. He stepped a few paces forward; and putting up the projecting brim of his hat, over which hung a heavy black plume, that still threw a deeper shade over his eyes, their piercing glance shot at once through the soul of Louis.

The stranger stood; and, without speaking, continued to look steadfastly on his future charge. With a progressive movement of his powerful eye, he perused the lineaments of Louis's face and figure from head to foot. Louis gazed on him in turn; and wondered at the awe he felt, of an unknown being, whose haughty port and unceremonious investigation rather announced the future tyrant, than guardian of his conduct. Hitherto his independent spirit had been wont to start like fire from the flint at any touch of oppression; and he could not but marvel within himself, why he should both fear and respect the stern aspect of this extraordinary man. The loftiness of his mien was well adapted to the countenance, which the raised brim of the hat disclosed. Dark mustachios, and a

pointed beard, marked his lip and chin; while the marble hue of his commanding features seemed to turn even luridly pale, as the brightness of his deeply set eyes flashed from under their shadowy brows, upon his immoveable companion. Louis could not withdraw his riveted eye from the searching gaze of the stranger; and he said to himself, "I am thus struck, because it is the representative of my father that stands before me: it is he, whom that father has commanded me to reverence as himself!" As he ended this short soliloquy, he unconsciously obeyed the sentiment of his mind, and respectfully bowed his head.

This action seemed to recall the stranger from the abstraction with which he was scanning his future pupil; and approaching him with a step which mingled a prince's dignity with the firmness of a soldier, he took Louis's hand, grasped, and wrung it, as if with some sudden sting of mental anguish; and then abruptly relinquishing it, threw himself into a chair, and pulling the beaver of his hat over his face, sat for some time leaning his head upon his hand, and preserving the silence which had not yet been broken.

Louis stood opposite to him, contemplating, with interest and expectation, the further developement of this friend of his father. At last the stranger spoke.

"Louis de Montemar," said he.

At the sound of his name, ejaculated by one who had continued so portentously silent, Louis started; and his heart laboured in his breast. He was now going to be told the secret of his destiny! What it was, his father demanded of his strength of mind, or bodily exertion; and how he was to prove himself worthy to be received as his son.

The stranger had paused, on uttering his first address. But it was only for a moment. Again the lightning of his eyes flashed upon the face of his auditor, and he resumed; but what he said was in the French language.

"Louis de Montemar, you have read the letter which I conveyed to you, from your father the Baron de Ripperda?"

"I have."

Again the stranger bent his head on his hand. The long plumes covered his face from observation; but Louis perceived that his whole frame trembled. After another, and a longer pause, he spoke again.—"And you are prepared to obey your father's injunction contained in that letter?"

"I am. For I believe my father would not so entirely commit the temporal, and therefore eternal, welfare of his son, to any man who is not worthy of the charge."

The stranger rose from his seat. "I am the man to whom your father has consigned this awful trust; and I accept your obedience. Know me as the Sieur Ignatius: and whatever else I may seem hereafter, it is not your interest to pry into. Your duty is to know of me no more than what I tell you; and to obey me, as if you knew me without reserve. To-morrow, at noon, your task shall be appointed. Meanwhile, stir not hence. Refresh yourself from the fatigues of your journey, and rest confident in me and your father. There is my pledge."

Before Louis could find words in a foreign language, to answer, satisfactorily to himself, so extraordinary a speech, the Sieur Ignatius had laid the promised miniature of the late Baroness upon the table, and disappeared from the room.

CHAPTER XII.

HAVING partaken of a slight refreshment, which the solitary domestic of the mansion set before him, Louis desired to be conducted to his bedchamber. The man opened a door at the further extremity of the saloon, and the weary traveller followed into an apartment even more desolate than the one he had left. The dull cold light of a winter moon, shrouded in snow clouds, gleamed through the mouldering remnants of what had been once damask curtains. These perishing relics of departed grandeur

were all the furniture which presented itself to the eye of Louis, as he looked around for a place of rest. At last, in a distant recess, deep in darkness, the candle he held in his hand showed a mass of something heaped together. He approached, and found his own travelling palliasse on the floor, and his baggage so disposed, as to supply the place of chair and table.

In recognising even these poor necessaries to the repose he needed, Louis cast not a thought on the comforts he did not see; but thanking God for the good provided, stretched himself upon his hard bed, and soon was wrapped in balmy slumber.

After a night of profound sleep, the bright smile of the awakened sun played on his eyelids; and starting from his pallet, with his usual morning spring of joy, he hailed the brilliancy of the opened day. In an apartment close to his chamber, he found that luxury of the Continent (which even this deserted mansion retained), a bath; and having enjoyed its refreshment, with spirits ready for whatever task might be assigned him, he prepared to meet again his mysterious visiter.

On re-entering the saloon, the gloominess which had appalled him the preceding evening was no longer there; it had disappeared before the chaser of shadows, and he advanced to a window to see what evidence of neighbourhood would present itself without.

A view, as novel as it was gay and picturesque, burst upon his sight. Under the windows stretched a high balustraded terrace, with broad stone steps leading down to a garden, intersected with parterres and long vistas, foliaged with glittering icicles. The ground was white with snow, which had been falling all night; and nothing having tracked the deserted walks, it lay in shining smoothness, as far as the low wall which bounded the garden. Beyond the parapet, trees of loftier growth stretched their ample arms over a plain that banked the mighty waters of the Danube, now arrested by the mightier hand of winter into a vast substantial causeway.

At this early hour in the morning, and on that long line of ice, whose limits were lost in the horizon, all Vienna

and its surrounding country seemed assembled. Carriages, of various forms and colours, elevated on sledges, and filled by their owners of as various quality and habits, swept along in every direction. Men and women, mounted on scates, darted past each other with the velocity of light; some with baskets of merchandise on their heads, and others simply wrapped in their bear-skins, — speeded forward on errands of business or of pleasure. Many of the sledged carriages took the direction of a beautiful island, in the midst of the river. It was crowned with cedars, and every other tree of perpetual green; they parted their verdant ranks, to give place to a sloping glade, on whose smooth bosom stood a splendid but fantastic mansion. A thousand strains of music pierced the distant air, while the gay *traineaux* advanced in succession before its gilded colonnades.

Louis gazed and listened. How different was this unexpected, this glittering scene, from the sombre-suited winters of Northumberland! There, the black and sterile rocks frowned horribly over the frozen stream, which lay in deathlike stillness under their gloomy shade; but yet that awful pause of nature was dear to his contemplative and happy mind. It filled him with recollections of the gracious voice which had spoken the world into existence from the sterner solitude of chaos! And then, when his mood for loneliness changed, he had only to quit his meditations amongst these caverns of cold and silence, to emerge at once into the warm, social circle of endearing kindred and animating friends!

While, with a fixed eye, he was thus musing on the present and the past, Gerard entered the room, and placed a tray with breakfast on the table. Louis enquired for Señor Castanos; the man answered, he was engaged.

"With whom?"

"I do not know."

"Then I am not to expect him at breakfast?"

"He went out at sunrise."

Louis asked no more questions, seeing that all around him were under the same law of *La Trappe*.

His lonely meal was soon despatched; and as he found

it impossible to fasten his attention to a book, or even in writing to the friends he loved, until he knew when he was to be removed from his strange situation, he left the table, and returned to his contemplations at the window. He was standing with folded arms, his eyes rambling over the ever-varying scene on the river, and sometimes wishing to be one in the animated group; when, hearing a step on the floor, he turned round, and beheld his expected visiter.

He wore the same enveloping dress as before; and, as before, shook aside the overhanging plumes of his hat as he advanced into the room. Louis was recovered from the amazement into which the mystery of his new guardian's address had thrown him on their first interview; but he did not attempt to dispel the awe impressed by his deportment, and his character as the Baron de Ripperda's friend; therefore he greeted his visiter's re-appearance with a collected, but profoundly respectful, demeanour.

The Sieur Ignatius approached him.

"I need not enquire of your health this morning: you look well and cheerful; and these are signs of a constitution indispensable to the fulfilment of your future duties."

Louis answered, with a grateful smile, that he had to thank Heaven for a vigorous frame, and for a destiny which, hitherto, had not afforded him an excuse for being otherwise than cheerful.

"The cheerfulness of a life passed in retirement," observed Ignatius, "being the effect of active amusements rather than of active duties, is a habit, and not principle; and must be re-moulded with stouter materials, to stand the buffets of the world. Louis, you are called from the happiness of self-enjoyment to that of self-neglect. You are called upon to toil for mankind."

"Point but the way, sir," cried Louis, in a subdued but earnest voice; "and, I trust, you shall not find me turn from it."

"It is in all respects different from the one you have left. Fond old age and female partiality have hitherto smoothed your path. In the midst of this effeminacy, I know you have meditated on a manly life,—on the career

of fame, its triumphs and its crown. But between the starting point and the goal there is a wide abyss. The imagination of visionary youth overleaps it; but, in fact, it must be trod with strong, unwearied feet — with wariness, privation, and danger."

The eyes of Louis, flashing the brave ardours of his heart (and which, he believed, were now to be summoned into licensed exercise), gave the only answer to the Sieur's remarks; but it was eloquent of the high expectations he had raised.

"Young man," continued his austere monitor, "I come to lay open this momentous pass to you; and, once entered, you are no longer your own. You belong to mankind: you are devoted to labour for them; and, above all, to sacrifice the daintiness of a pampered body, the passions of your soul, the affections of your heart, to the service of the country which was that of your ancestors, and to which your father is now restored."

"I am ready, sir," exclaimed Louis, "to take my post, be it where it may; and I trust I shall maintain it as becomes my father's son."

"At present," replied the Sieur, "it is within these walls."

Louis looked aghast. The animation of hope, springing forward to military distinction, faded from his countenance. "Within these walls!—How?—What can be done here?—I believed — I thought the army——"

This incoherent reply was suddenly arrested by the steady fixture of Ignatius's eyes. A pause ensued, doubly painful to Louis, on account of the shock his expectations had received, and because he had so weakly betrayed it. With the tint of shame displacing the paleness of disappointment, he stood before his father's friend, looking on the ground: at last the Sieur spoke.

"What army do you speak of?"

With increased embarrassment, Louis replied, "The Spanish army — that which the Marquis Santa Cruz gave my uncle to understand was soon to march against Austria, to compel the Emperor to fulfil his broken treaties."

"And to meet that army in the heart of the Austrian

capital," said Ignatius, "you thought was the object of your present summons?"

Unable to speak, from a humiliating consciousness of absurdity, Louis coloured a deeper scarlet, and again cast his eyes to the ground.

"No," continued the Sieur; "there are ways of forcing sovereigns to do their duties, besides that which the sword commands. If it will soothe your disappointment to think that you labour in one of these, believe what you wish, and rest satisfied."

"I am satisfied," returned Louis, "and ready to be confined within these walls, at whatever employment, and for whatever time, my father may choose to dictate."

"Follow me."

As Ignatius pronounced this command, he opened the saloon door; and, crossing the gallery, stopped before another door at its extremity. He unlocked it; and Louis, who had obeyed his peremptory summons, followed him into a large dungeon-like room. It was furnished with an escritoire, and a large table, covered with implements for writing.

"This, Louis de Montemar, is your post," cried the Sieur, closing the door and bolting it. "Here you must labour for Spain, and your own destiny; and here," added he, in a decisive voice, "you must take an oath of implicit obedience, and of inviolable secrecy, that neither bribery of wealth, nor honours, nor beauty, nor threats of ruin, nor torments, nor of death, shall ever induce you to betray what may be confided to you in this chamber."

Appalled at this demand, Louis did not answer. The Sieur examined his changing countenance.

"You cannot hesitate to give me this guarantee of honour!"

"Honour does not need such guarantee," replied Louis, turning on him the assured look of conscious worth; "trust me! and you shall find, that in no case, where duty commands obedience, or honour enjoins silence, death itself can compel me to dereliction."

Ignatius shook his head.

"This will not do, in an affair like the present. When

the interests of millions may hang upon a yea or nay, he, who has it in his power to pronounce either, must be bound, on the perdition of his soul, to utter that only which ensures the general safety."

He paused for an answer. But Louis remaining silent, as if still unconvinced, his stern monitor resumed with augmented asperity.

"I do not like this mincing nicety. It savours more of effeminate dreaming, than manly intention to observe and to act. At a word, take the oath I proffer; or, prepare to set out this night, on your return to England; to the absurd people, who have taught you to pant for glory, but to start from its coming shadow."

The Sieur turned haughtily away. The reasoning faculties of his pupil became confused. Was he doing right, or wrong, in resisting this demand? It called on him, to stake his salvation on the performance of actions, and the preservation of secrets, the nature of which he neither knew, nor could guess at. It seemed to him more than just, that a stranger, however sanctioned, should, at so early a stage of acquaintance, expect that perfect reliance on his virtue, as would warrant a man, in so awful a venture, as that of vowing to adopt all that stranger might propose. But the authority with which he pronounced the sentence, which should follow persisted refusal, struck Louis with astonishment. Who was he, that durst so fearlessly take on himself the responsibility of banishing, without appeal, and with disgrace, the son of the Baron de Ripperda? As Louis looked up, with something of this question in his eyes, he met the searching glance of Ignatius.

"Young man," said he, "you think your honour insulted by the mention of an oath. Your honour, which is yet untried! Which has passed through no ordeal, but those presented by phantastic imagination! What must the Baron de Ripperda think, when he hears of a son, who so insults his father's approved honour, as to doubt whether he ought to pledge his faith on that father's virtue? And, after all," added the Sieur, "what more is demanded of you, than the surety, which is offered every

hour by the rest of mankind, on the slightest requisition, and on the commonest occasions?"

"What is slightly assumed," returned Louis, "may be as slightly relinquished. And I trust, that my father will not condemn, nor his friend continue to misjudge, a hesitation, which springs from the inexpressible awe in which I hold the nature of an oath. By that most solemn of appeals, I have never yet called upon the presence of my Creator; therefore, I tremble to do it now! But," added he, "as it is the will of my father, who, through your agency, demands it of me, I consent: — yet with a reservation, I will yield to no man: — *The Law of God, still to be my umpire!* And, I am ready to swear."

The Sieur looked at him steadily, but not sternly. "It is well," and opening his breast, with those words, he took out a paper, and laying it down before Louis, said, — "Subscribe that paper with your name."

Louis took it, and read a form of words in the Spanish language, which claimed his allegiance to Spain; by the privileges and pledges of his long line of ancestors, born in that realm; by the re-union of his father to that realm; and by the restitution which the King and council had made to him, of the Ripperda territories in Andalusia and Granada, forfeited to the crown in the year 1673, by the rebellious conduct of Don Juan de Montemar, last Duke of that name. In just return for this grace from the land of his ancestors, William, the present Baron de Ripperda, had taken an oath of fealty to Philip and to Spain. And Louis de Montemar, his only son, and heir to all his possessions, honours, and civic duties, was called upon to devote himself, by the same solemn rite, to Spain, as his country, and to Philip, as his liege lord. At the end of this official document, a postscript was written in the Baron's own hand, demanding of his son, to add to the signature required, an oath, to perform all that might be appointed him, by his father directly, or indirectly through the Sieur Ignatius, for the service of the King; and to hold all secrets confided to him for that purpose, *inviolable as his Christian faith.*

Louis saw nothing in bonds, which his father's hand-

writing had sanctified, and which he had sealed with so holy a measure of fidelity at the close, to suggest further hesitation; and, without reluctance, he set his name to the paper, and pressed to his lips the sacred volume, presented by the Sieur.

"Now, Louis," said, he," your task is easy. Will is a conquering sword!" As he spoke, a smile played for a moment on his austere lip; but, like a sun-beam on a dark cloud, it suddenly disappeared, and all was gloom again. He opened the escritoire, and took from the shelves two thick scrolls in strange characters. Louis continued to gaze on the face of this mysterious man, as he arranged the sheets on the table. The smile, which had just lit up those lurid features with the nameless splendours of mental beauty, was passèd away; but the impression remained on his pupil's heart. Louis congratulated himself on the assurance that it gave him, and said inwardly, "I shall never forget that magic smile, so eloquent of every ineffable grace of mind and spirit! It is a pledge to me, that I may love, as well as reverence, its possessor."

Ignatius placed the papers before his attentive pupil, telling him, they comprised his duty for the day; that he must copy them stroke by stroke, for the inaccuracy of a single curve, might produce a train of evils, the extent of which, no guess could assign a termination. The Sieur then sat down, to give minute instruction respecting the execution of these momentous documents. The task was complicated, and of a nature totally different from any thing Louis had ever practised, or could possibly have anticipated. However, he cheerfully engaged in its performance; and his employer, having seen the precision of his commencement, rose to withdraw. Before he quitted the room, he turned and said, that he supposed it was hardly necessary to enjoin the propriety of always keeping that chamber locked, both when it was occupied and when it was vacant. On Louis's bowing to the implied command, he added, that Gerard would strike on the door, when dinner was served in the saloon; and that at midnight, he would himself return to the château, to inspect the papers, and affix his seal to their contents.

Louis continued from noon, till the gloom of twilight, at his laborious penmanship. He knew nothing of the particular purport of any one of the numerous sheets he was transcribing. The characters were unknown to him; but he was assured by Ignatius, all were directed to the service of Spain; and with alacrity and exactness he had completed half his task, before the duskiness of the hour, and the promised stroke of Gerard, gave him a short respite.

Solitude was again at his temperate meal. He had heard enough from the Sieur, to warn him against the imprudence of putting unnecessary questions; and, determined to allow all unimportant circumstances, at least, to pass by him unnoticed by oral remark, he said nothing to his taciturn attendant about the continued absence of Castanos. His dinner was despatched in a few minutes, and taking the candles in his hand, he returned to the locked chamber to finish his work.

At the appointed hour Ignatius re-appeared.

The several heaps of papers were arranged for his inspection, and, with a nod of approbation, he examined them one by one. He approved what was done, and, turning to the escritoire, sealed them, and affixed to each packet its appropriate address. What were the names on these superscriptions, Louis had no guess, though he did not doubt they were all to be consigned to the Baron de Ripperda; and (as he observed, by the proceedings of the Sieur, they were ready to be put into their last envelope) he ventured to ask, whether he might not add one packet more to his father. Ignatius remained silent. Though Louis saw the reverse of encouragement on his contracting brow, he would not be so repulsed, but steadily repeated his request; adding, that he was particularly anxious to despatch this letter, as it was not only to assure his father of his devotedness to his commands, but to beg him to forward one on most urgent business, which he had enclosed for Don Ferdinand d'Osorio.

"Your father will have sufficient assurance of your obedience in the execution of these papers," returned the Sieur; "and as to promoting a correspondence with Don Ferdinand d'Osorio;—in your situation, that is out of the

question. Your residence here is unknown to any one, and must continue so, till the affair that commands your service is made or marred. Your packet, therefore, cannot go."

During this speech he opened the leathern bag that was to be the travelling case of the despatches.

Louis sighed convulsively, as he put his letter back into his bosom. Ignatius took no notice of this heart-struck sign of disappointment, but calmly continued packing the papers. Louis thought of the unhappy Alice; of the tears she shed on his neck at parting; of his vow to restore to her, her peace of mind; and he could not endure his own cowardice, in having been overawed, to the appearance of giving up her cause, even for a moment. He resumed in a firmer voice—

"I seek no correspondence with Don Ferdinand, sir. But that letter is to demand from him, an act of justice, to a lovely woman whose happiness he has destroyed. And to do this, I have solemnly engaged myself to her, and to my own heart."

"Louis de Montemar," replied the Sieur, "you are entered on a course of life, that will not admit of romantic trifling. There is but one direction for all your faculties, — the public good. Private concerns must take care of themselves."

He closed the leathern case over the despatches, and covering its padlock with wax, stamped it with his seal.

"I repeat, sir," cried Louis impetuously, "I have pledged my honour to the forwarding this letter to Don Ferdinand; and the public good will not deem it necessary to make me a private deceiver!"

Ignatius turned on him a look of haughty reproof.

"Young man, you know little of your duty towards the public good, if you can put its smallest tittle into competition with the adjustment of an amour. The girl's folly must be her punishment."

The indignation of insulted virtue burnt upon the cheek of Louis.

"You mistake me, sir! She for whom I am interested, is as pure from unchaste weakness, as my father's honour

from a stain. Her soul alone pines under a vow, extorted from her by this ungenerous Spaniard; and to release her from the wretched load, is the sole purport of my letter to him."

"You love the girl, yourself," said the inflexible Ignatius, taking no visible notice of the increasing agitation of his pupil.

"I do love her," returned he, "but not in the way your observation would imply. I love her, as becomes the son of the Baroness de Ripperda, to love the daughter of her sister; that sister, who has been to him, in the place of the mother, Heaven took from him at his birth! Alice Coningsby is the person, to whom I have bound myself to release her conscience from the bonds of an artful man. And after this explanation, I cannot believe that the friend of my father will longer withhold my letter!"

The Sieur listened with his eyes bent to the ground. He looked up when Louis ceased speaking; and saw, by his proud indignant air, that he rather expected occasion for further braving a refusal, than to receive the permission, he effected to think, could no longer be denied.

"Louis," said he, "I see what is passing in your mind; but I will not be rigid to your present feelings. Your letter shall go to Don Ferdinand. But you must expunge from it all reference to where you are; and tell him, to send the acquittal of your imprudent cousin direct to herself."

Surprised and thankful, Louis readily undertook to rewrite the letter according to these injunctions; a few minutes put it into the form required; and enclosing the irresistible appeal of Alice herself, to her ungenerous lover, he sealed the packet, and delivered it to the Sieur. The despatches being fastened up, they were to be committed to the particular charge of Castanos, who was to carry the bag, which contained them, to Madrid. Louis's grateful heart was again going to pour itself out, but Ignatius checked the ingenuous effusion, by turning severely round, as he moved to the door.

"This time," said he, "I have yielded to your request, in consideration of its pious motive. But you must fully understand me, and then you will not presume more on

this indulgence, than the spirit of your recent oath will sanction. Here not only ends your correspondence with Don Ferdinand, but closes your communication with every person beyond these walls, until our affair is terminated. Not even the inhabitants of Lindisfarne must know of your being at Vienna."

"I lament my ignorance of the necessity for such precaution," replied Louis, "but the interdicted intimation is now beyond my recall. I wrote to both my uncles from Ostend; and twice during my journey to Vienna."

"Such an accident was provided against," answered Ignatius; "Castanos had the Baron de Ripperda's orders to destroy all such letters in their way to the post; so be at rest on that head. Your father himself will take care to let Mr. Athelstone and Sir Anthony know that you are well, and conducting yourself to his satisfaction."

"I am in his hands, and in yours," said Louis, bowing his head; while, struck by so strange an act of precaution, he had not power to utter a word more. The Sieur drew his cloak over the despatches, and, without further observations, left the apartment.

CHAPTER XIII.

Next morning's rayless sun found Louis passing from his hardly pressed pillow to the prosecution of his appointed task for the day. Ignatius had laid before him new papers of a totally different character from the former, and much more difficult to transcribe.

As he continued to write he heard the furious beating of a snow-storm against the windows, which, in this apartment, were not only grated, but too high in the wall to allow of outward view. The heat of a well-filled stove excluded the increased cold of the season; and the fierceness of the elements made him the less regret the exercise

he must relinquish, or lose all hope of reducing the immense piles before him.

The Sieur appeared at his former nocturnal hour, to receive what had been finished, and to leave other manuscripts, to which he desired duplicates. Day after day, Louis was kept to his desk; and every night delivered to his unrelenting task-master the labour of the day.

At the expiration of a week, the Sieur told him he should not see him again till the first of the ensuing month; but that he had a correspondence to leave with him, which he must completely transcribe by the time of his return. Louis received his orders in respectful silence; and, when he was again left to his solitary toil, he found that his voluminous task was in the Sclavonian and Turkish characters. Neither of these languages had been parts of his studies; so he pursued his monotonous employment each succeeding day, from morning until midnight, without the accession of one new idea, or a moment's leisure for retrospection on former acquirements.

The sun rose, and the sun set; the weather, foul or fair; gloomy in storm, or gay with the scintillation of exhilarating frost; all found Louis de Montemar close at his desk. The iron-bound windows had never opened to the air; and the charcoal fumes, which warmed the apartment, having no egress, hung in narcotic vapours on the vaulted roof. A heavy languor fell on its lonely inhabitant, and grew on him from day to day, till it left him hardly any other consciousness of being than the faculty of moving his now habituated hand perpetually over the infinite reams of paper which lay before him.

On the night of the 1st of February, according to his promise, Ignatius entered the prison-room of his unrelaxing secretary. The piles, which were completed at last, extorted from his unbending loftiness an exclamation of admiration at such faultless execution and indefatigable perseverance. Louis's face no longer lighted up, as it was wont, at the voice of praise; but he bowed, though in silence. Had Ignatius spared a glance from the laborious heap to its unrepining artificer, that face would have told the tale his tongue had not uttered. The bloomy crimson of his cheek

had perished under the withering breath of stoved confinement; and his eyes, before so luminous in health, so bright in youthful enjoyment, were sunk in languor under his darkening brows. So thoroughly was the Sieur absorbed in the business of his visit, he might not have observed these changes, had he not accidentally come in contact with the hand of his pupil in taking one of the packets. He started, as the touch seemed to scorch him.

"How is this?" cried he, eyeing Louis from head to foot; "you are ill."

"Perhaps the confinement, sir," returned he, "may discompose me a little. But custom will enure me to it; and, meanwhile, it is of no consequence."

"No," said Ignatius, "your diligence has been too severe; you must have air and exercise. To-morrow you shall try their efficacy. I will send a respectable servant of my own to attend you over the city."

Louis thankfully embraced the proposal.

The morrow's sun rose brilliant as on the first morning he had hailed its beams from his chamber at Vienna. Louis dismissed a breakfast, for which he had no appetite; and, with a spring of joy, he could not have conceived it possible to have experienced at merely stepping forth into the open air, he followed Martini (the promised attendant from the Sieur) out of the great gates of the château.

The man was an Italian, and possessed none of the taciturnity of his mysterious master. With the respect due to a superior, but the garrulous self-consequence of his country, the gay foreigner freely uttered his remarks on every object of sight, as he conducted his companion along the hoar-frosted avenue to the extensive glacis before the fortified walls of Vienna. Martini led the way through the Wieden-gate. Louis followed, but paid no attention to street nor square, palace nor cathedral; he was all occupied by the reviving aspirations he drew at every breath from an atmosphere, the ethereal quality of which seemed to penetrate every pore, and, by an enchanting inebriation, to restore him at once to his wonted elasticity of spirits.

Martini conducted him through the finest squares of the city, and along the most magnificent part of the suburbs,

towards the frozen Danube. It was now the hour of high gala. The noise and bustle of a countless multitude, passing and repassing in a thousand different directions, soon summoned the concentrated senses of Louis to regard outward objects. The beams of the sun played over the landscape; hues of light blue, intermingled with bloomy purple deepening into shade, chequered the hills on the horizon. A waving line of shining snow marked the heights of Calemberg; and a sky of the purest azure canopied the scene. At the distance of his windows from the river he could only view a various and interminable mass of human beings moving on its surface; but now he could distinguish the peculiar dress and aspect of each individual, of all nations, assembled on that universal theatre. Turks, Tartars, Greeks, Italians, Muscovites, and Swedes, English and French, all appeared, as if travelling to some vast senate of mankind; or rather, so gay were their habits, so gorgeous their equipages, it might be taken for a pageantry in fairy land.

Delighted to see the attention of his charge at last aroused, Martini allowed him, for some time, to gaze around in pleased amazement; then, resuming his office of *Cicerone* with augmented eloquence, he particularised the objects most worthy observation, and explained them with the accuracy of an itinerary. The Asiatic structure, raising its gilded domes over the cedars of the island, and which Louis had noticed from his window, Martini informed him was the *Favorita;* the favourite palace of the Imperial family. It was now their temporary residence; and in that direction he saw numerous carriages, of strange shapes and capricious magnificence, shoot along the ice. Fancy seemed to have exhausted all her varieties of form in the construction of these whimsical vehicles. Some were fashioned like triumphal cars, others like the fabled shells of marine deities, and many of shapes so fantastical and grotesque, that the incumbent seemed lying in the grasp of some sea or land monster. All were garnished with gilding, emblazoned with arms, or gallant devices; while the master, wrapped in ermines, guided, with silken reins, the flying horses, which, caparisoned in glittering housings,

flashed by the spectator like steeds of fire. In some of the gayest *traineaux*, formed like scallop-shells, and bedded with fur, beautiful women were seen reclining; while gentlemen sat on the sledge behind, managing the horses, and conversing with the ladies.

Louis was particularly struck with the singular beauty of the animals which drew these carriages. They were evidently of the Arabian breed, slight of limb, and carrying their branching necks with the grace of an antelope. The peculiar airiness and freedom of their pace suited well with the Eastern magnificence of their trappings. An equipage, with four of these fine creatures, stopping near him, had just engaged his attention, when he found himself hurried forward by a crowd of foot passengers rushing to meet a cavalcade which preceded the Empress. At the moment of general clamour he thought he heard his own name suddenly ejaculated. He listened, — it was repeated, and in the voice of Duke Wharton. Louis's heart leaped to the sound. He turned towards it, and saw the Duke standing behind the car of one of the Arch-duchesses. Another gentleman shared his post of honour, and guided the reins, while the Duke's eyes met the eager recognition, and outstretched arms, of his friend. The carriage shot swiftly onward, but Wharton also extended his arms to Louis, and, as he was snatched from his sight, pointed to the *Favorita*. Louis understood, that it was there he must seek him; and thither he determined to go, when he should walk out the following day.

The sight of the Duke not merely recalled the enthusiastic feeling with which he originally regarded him, but presented, to Louis, the image of England, and all that it contained, dear to his habits and to his heart! Tears rushed into his eyes: they seemed to overflow his soul, as he clasped his hands, and inwardly exclaimed, "England! beloved land of liberty and tenderness! renown may be sought in other countries, but happiness is to be found alone in thee!"

For the first time, since his arrival at Vienna, did he allow his heart to speak even to himself, to acknowledge that he was unhappy! That he had exchanged the generous

freedom of the home of his youth, for harsh imprisonment in a foreign land. That he had parted with relations, who loved and honoured him, to become dependent on a stranger, and bound to the toil of a slave!

"Is such to be the purpose of my life?" said he to himself, as, with eyes blinded by emotion, he turned from the gay scene; "is such to be the oblivion of all that I took so much pains to acquire? Such, the grave of talents, my too partial relations cherished with so many hopes? My boasting ambition! — where has it led me? Oh, Wharton, what will you see me now? Crushed in spirit, and bowed with servitude; cheated into vassalage; and chained to an employment that any hireling might perform as honourably! For, what trust is confided in me? I copy an unknown character; from whom, and to whom, I am completely ignorant. No; it cannot be the will of my father, thus to degrade and sacrifice his son!"

With these thoughts goading his fevered nerves, unnoting the way he went, he hurried from the Danube. By accident he took the path to the château; and his guide, marvelling at the fitful humours of the young secretary, followed in silence. With a pulse in every vein; and feelings, exasperated at the present, from immediate comparison with the past; and yearning for the moment of throwing himself into the arms of Wharton, as if that one embrace would restore to him at once his liberty, his country, and his friends; Louis did not recover his attention to visible objects, till he found himself again within the dreary wall of the château. He locked himself into the room of his labour, and, throwing himself on the floor, gave way to the regrets that overwhelmed him in restrainless floods of bitter tears. In Lindisfarne, he had wept in tenderness and in sorrow. He had known the pangs of parting; and given the tribute of his tears to that racking moment; but he had never felt completely unmanned till now.

Hour passed over hour; Gerard knocked at the door, to announce that his solitary meal was prepared, but he knocked unheeded. At last, the deepening glooms of evening, enclosing him in darkness, reminded him the day

was past; and that his demanded task of the morning was yet to begin. Aware that the man, whom he was required to revere as a guardian, but whom the pangs of recollection made him now abhor as a tyrant, would exact it from him at midnight, he started from the ground. At that moment of self-recall to labour, the yoke of bondage pressed, with insupportable weight, upon his soul.

"I will not endure it!" cried he: "why should I immure myself, like a condemned wretch? Shut up in solitude; fastened to the duty of a machine; without sound of human voice, but that of my hard task-master! Without breathing the free air of Heaven, unless accompanied with lackeys! Is this a fate, chosen by the Baron de Ripperda for his son, his only son? It is mockery, and I will not endure it."

The fever in his blood exaggerated, to his perturbed mind, every mysterious circumstance in his situation. He might be, now, the unconscious instrument of treason; or the cheated agent of political treachery. His father's confidence might be abused, by the impenetrable Ignatius; and he be ignorant, alike of his son's being at Vienna, and of the illiterate drudgery to which he was consigned.

All this seemed the strange effect of Louis having seen Duke Wharton. But much sprung from a distempered imagination, and disordered nerves; the consequence of loneliness, want of exercise, and long confinement in a deleterious atmosphere. However, the sudden appearance of Wharton, was, certainly, the circumstance which at once awoke all his sensibilities to the perception of his changed state: of the liberty, he had been persuaded to relinquish; of the liberty, he might, perhaps, regain by the Duke's interference! The last idea was a vague one, but still it was visible: it had a shadowy existence, between hope and despair; and Louis clasped at the delusive shade.

A prey to these confused imaginations, he could not command, either the desire, or the power, to resume his labours. Leaning his throbbing head upon the table, he allowed the gloom of black night to surround him; without even the wish to dispel it, by going into the adjoining

room for one of the candles, which had been, for many hours, burning to waste.

As the old clock of the mansion struck ten, he was aroused from his moody position by a gleam of light. He looked up, and saw the Sieur Ignatius standing before him with a lamp in his hand.

Louis started, disordered, from his chair.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked the Sieur, in a kindly voice; "I fear you are seriously ill."

Louis, in attempting to speak, was agitated to suffocation. Ignatius fixed his eyes on his haggard countenance.

"Your zeal has over-wrought your strength. Health is as necessary as will to the completion of your duty. In these respects, you must learn to be an economical, as well as a generous, servant to your country; for that is the only way to be an efficient one. I see you have been too ill to prepare this night's papers."

The unusual interest in his feelings, which this address intimated; and the perfect confidence in his will to perform, what he had not done, smote on the heart of Louis; and, embarrassed and miserable, he bowed in silence.

"Sit down," continued the Sieur, evidently struck with the changed appearance of his charge; "I was improvident, not to calculate on the ardour of your character, and give you orders to make pauses in your work, and take daily exercise in the garden. I ought to have thought on the garden before; for your walk of to-day, beyond the walls, has already been productive of vexation. You have been seen; and, to my great embarrassment, recognised. Have you any idea by whom?"

"By the Duke of Wharton," returned Louis, with all the recollections of that moment flushing his cheek; "I saw him on the Danube."

"And you saluted him, first?" demanded Ignatius.

"No," answered Louis; "but I turned to a voice, calling on my name through the crowd, and met the eyes of my friend."

"And he recognised you? and you him?"

"We did."

"Mischief upon mischief!" ejaculated the Sieur, starting from his chair, and striding across the room in extraordinary discomposure. He turned suddenly upon Louis. "So thoroughly did I believe you incapable of conduct so inconsistent with your awful engagements, that I have absolutely contradicted the mutual recognition. On being told of it to-night, by the Emperor's confessor; and the inferences drawn from the fact; I empowered him to affirm that he knew, from an authority he could not dispute, that Louis de Montemar *was not in Vienna;* and that, whoever had occasioned the report, must have mistaken some other person for the son of the Baron de Ripperda. Think, then, faithless boy, into what a dilemma your recognition of Duke Wharton has brought the friend of your father! Into what a danger you have precipitated the cause, in which that father has embarked his fortunes and his life!"

"Sir," said Louis, with the dignity of conscious probity, answering a man who had so lately put his affirmation to a falsehood; "my office, here, is inconsistent with my awful engagements. I bound myself, to the dedication of all my talents, all the energies of my mind and heart, to the service of my father's country, now become mine; and to be obedient to him, as its agent. But I find myself, and all these talents, few or many, which have been the labour of my life to cultivate, chained down to the one mechanical act — of writing on this table, — in a character unknown to me, and on subjects concerning which I am as ignorant as the messenger that carries them to and fro! I am not treated with the confidence of a son, but the suspicion of a slave; and I have my doubts, that I am really so degraded by the commands of my father."

"This is new language, Louis de Montemar! You have spoken with the Duke of Wharton. He knows all that you know: and he has put this complexion on the affair! well he knows how to sap and to overturn — and a fit agent for a father's ruin he has found in the son of the Baron de Ripperda."

As the terrible Ignatius delivered this, he approached close to Louis, and, seizing his arm, fixed on him his powerful eyes, as if to look into his soul.

"I can bear your scrutiny, sir," said he, "were you to rip open my breast with the poniard your hand rests upon. It is not in me to betray any man. I have not spoken with Duke Wharton."

"And you must not," returned the Sieur, recovering his presence of mind, and dropping his hand from the dagger's hilt he had unconsciously grasped; "you must avoid even the chance of his seeing you again. You are ill, and you are moody. You require air and action, and you shall have them; but, henceforth, they must be found in the garden of the château. Be obedient to this necessity; and I will forget the phrensied language which, if not Wharton, some demon must have conjured, to betray your reason and your duty."

"Sir," replied Louis in great emotion, "I do not wish you to forget it. I wish you to answer me, to all its points. I wish to know, at once, whether I am a trusted servant, or an abused slave? Trust me, and that labour will be happiness — distinction! — which is now misery, and degradation insupportable!"

For some time, the lofty Ignatius regarded his pupil's almost convulsed features, with a steady perusal of their varying expressions. At last, putting his hand on the shoulder of Louis, he said in a calm voice, "Compose yourself, and listen to me. Hear from my lips, truths that must be your future guide in the destiny you have chosen; but to combat with the evils of which, you come totally unprovided. You have educated yourself for the service of your country. You are full of ardour to engage in it. But how? Not as she directs, but as yourself chooses. You would fight her battles, in the field of blood; you would fill her cars of triumph! But you disdain to watch for her in secret; — to labour, in obscurity, for her ultimate peace. This last is virtue in her purest simplicity; and, therefore, your father awarded to the virgin honour of his son, the unblemished sacrifice."

Louis believed that he now, indeed, listened to truth. But why did he, who could assert it with so much dignity, — why did he utter so mean a denial of a fact, as to affirm, that the son of Baron de Ripperda was not in Vienna?

The prompt intelligence of the Sieur's rapid glance had seen the effect of this denial on the mind of his pupil; and, while he pursued his remarks on what had passed, he noticed the equivocation he had made, as a common style in diplomacy: "Your being in the suburbs, and not in Vienna," said he, "afforded me the advantage of this ambiguity. Always hold in mind, that no advantage, however trivial, is contemptible to a negotiator. The smallest causes often produce the greatest effects. Alberoni's mysterious policy, which held Europe in awe for five years, was revealed and destroyed, in one moment, by the dropping of his courier's cloak-bag into a river!"

While Louis sighed to think that subterfuge could ever be a duty, he was filled with ingenuous shame at the suspicion he had dared to proclaim; at the reproaches, with which his impatient doubts, and personal feelings, had provoked him to insult the trusted friend of his father. The forbearance of Ignatius, under this unexpected flood of impassioned violence, augmented the contrition of the disordered offender; and when the Sieur rose to withdraw, Louis could only say, "Bear with me this night. I am incapable of speaking — almost of thinking; — but bear with me! and to-morrow you shall find that I have not listened in vain."

CHAPTER XIV.

Next day found Louis in a state far from tranquillised. Thorough dissatisfaction with himself had prevented his eyes closing during the night; and he arose in the morning only to continue his self-accusations. He condemned the indulgence of feelings so inconsistent with his usual candour in dubious circumstances, and which had hurried him, not only into an unreasonable despair of his own situation, but, with the most dishonouring suspicions, to provoke the man who, it was madness to doubt, was the confidential colleague of the Baron de Ripperda. And

yet, while Louis vowed to himself that no privation of air or action, no solitude and monotony of life, should ever excite him to a second murmur; while he panted for the moment in which he might repair, by a full apology, the indignity he had cast upon his father's friend; he could not warm the chill at his heart, when he recollected, that the first amends Ignatius was likely to demand of him, would be to relinquish all hope of seeing the Duke of Wharton.

This conviction threw his still agitated mind into tumults. In the parting interview between Louis and Mr. Athelstone, that venerable man had taken off the absolute terms of his interdiction respecting the Duke. In the wide and busy world his nephew and Wharton might meet again; and in circumstances that Louis could not bend to his promise of avoidance. On this ground, the Pastor now left him to his own discretion. "But, remember," added he, "it is to your *discretion!*"

Louis thought on this licence from his revered uncle, with the outstretching arms of his soul towards his beloved friend; and he vainly pursued his laborious penmanship to get rid of the attendant ideas. The well-known voice, calling on him through the crowd, haunted his ear. Again and again, that form which, in his mind, never had a parallel, leaning towards him from the car, rose before him. He threw down his pen, and rested his working brain upon his hand. He could not recollect how Wharton looked, for he had not seen how he looked; all that his glad eyes had taken in of that dear apparition was, that it was he! — that it was his resplendent countenance which shone on him from that gay eminence!

"And I must not see it again!" cried Louis; "all with whom I am connected, seem leagued, at one time or other, to exclude him from my society. But they never can shut him from my heart. His gracious selection of me, from a crowd, older, and of more approved merit, than myself; his own distinguished qualities, and irrepressible confidence in my honour; have bound me to love him through a life that is condemned to fly him as if he were my direst enemy."

Louis opened his writing-case, to recreate his eyes with the sight of Wharton's letter, that he might hear him speak, through that at least; but, as soon as he touched it, and saw the superscription, the characters of which again recalled the image of the writer, and with it the home in which he had first read the letter, he dropped it back into the case.

"I will not further unnerve myself," cried he, "by pressing memory on my heart! I will not pervert hours of past happiness to the purposes of present wretchedness. I must remember that I am called to self-denial; and you, dear, generous Wharton! fated to be my first, are to continue my repeated sacrifice."

Louis was found at noon, by his punctual visiter, seated at his desk with his former diligence. A slight hectic coloured his cheek as he rose to receive him. The Sieur smiled. Louis again saw the heaven open, which had beguiled him into confidence on his first arrival; and this smile was not so flitting as its predecessor. It dwelt on his features, like a bending seraph, lingering on its cloud.

"Louis," cried he, "I come to trust you."

Louis caught the hand, which was extended to him, and pressed it to his lips.

"I come to trust you," said he; "but not as I see you expect. I come to call again upon your faith; to demand your fulfilment of the whole of this affair, while you must yet remain ignorant of its particular purpose; I come to *trust in your honour* that you will not further doubt the integrity of the man on whom your father has conferred confidence without reserve. His interests, and mine, are united, never to be separated in this world: we rise, or we fall together. You redden, Louis! But I do not trifle with you. It is possible that accident, if not design, may betray a scheme of such important bearings; and I will not leave it in the power of malice to accuse the son of Baron de Ripperda of treachery, or of imprudence, in such a case."

"My recent conduct," replied he, "gives you no reliance on my prudence; and you believe me unworthy of fuller confidence."

" No, Louis ; that I still hold you in ignorance, is a greater proof of my dependence on your fidelity, than if I bound your personal interests, with your honour, by unfolding to you any part of the glorious plan on which you are employed. Your oath ties your conscience to the fulfilment of your duty ; but I want your free will. I want, what I thought I had, the open eye of faith in the virtue of your cause, the forward hand of zealous devotedness in the execution. Give me your mind, Louis ; and I shall no longer see that changing cheek and languid frame ! Zeal is life."

" Trust me !" returned Louis, " and my mind ——" then checking himself, with a sudden paleness displacing the flush of resolution, he added, with a forced smile, " I know I must prove my sincerity by a victim ; and I yield a dear one. I will not see the Duke of Wharton till you or my father grant me that privilege."

" To see him," replied the Sieur, resuming his usual austerity, " it is probable you may one day have perfect liberty ; but never to cultivate his friendship."

" How ? Wherefore ?"

" He is the enemy of your father."

" O, no — I have reason to believe he would gladly make my father his friend."

The moment this had escaped him, Louis could have plucked his tongue out for having uttered so inconsiderate a speech ; so much did he fear, that Ignatius would immediately demand what was that reason. But, for once, the sagacious politician lost an opportunity of acquiring information. Absorbed in the haughty consciousness of his own pre-eminence, he did not put the dreaded question ; but, with a scornful motion of his lips, replied, —

" I doubt it not. But Philip Wharton would purchase without gold. He may defraud, but he cannot bestow."

" I do not understand you, sir !"

" Future events will speak plainly," returned the Sieur ; " and, meanwhile, I rely on your engagement to avoid him."

Louis smothered an indignant rising in his bosom, and, without answering, bowed his head in ratification of his promise.

Ignatius turned to the table; and, gathering up the manuscripts prepared for him, he told his now silent companion not to resume his labours till be had taken the air on the terrace. "But," added he, "you must not forget that, until I direct otherwise, the garden is your utmost limits."

"I shall not wish to extend them," replied Louis, with a resigned, but lofty bow; and the Sieur left the room.

With his expanding heart again closed by the repulsive demeanour of his governor, Louis saw him depart. A feeling of complete desolation spread over his soul. Without having found comfort in the Sieur's presence, he felt a more dreary loneliness when he was gone; as the hope of winning at all on so unbending a nature seemed utterly at an end. He had tried it by anticipating, what he knew would be exacted, the resignation of his friend. But Ignatius had received the sacrifice, not merely without sensibility, but with the most unsparing remarks. The tender care with which all Louis's good dispositions had been fostered by the secluded guardians of his youth, made him doubly feel how sterile is the communion of the world. Interest may bind man to man, and extort the appearance of virtue; but affection is not there, to nourish or to reward its actual growth.

"Misjudging Ignatius! he demands my mind, when he might have my heart! I would love him, but he will not let me. In vain I watched for another of those smiles! I hailed the first on my arrival, as an earnest of a gracious master! And the second, which greeted me to-day, I welcomed as a pledge, that I was forgiven for my yesterday's impatience; and how soon was it displaced by the hard aspect of despotic command! But I deserve it," exclaimed Louis; "did not my humiliation, at having so frantically rebelled, vanish as soon? I was even on the point of a second violence, had not some good angel stilled the tumult of my soul."

Having walked his dismal apartment some time, continuing the same soliloquy, he threw himself into a chair, to compose his mind, and to confirm it. He arraigned himself for the weakness of his present discontents; and sum-

moned his best reason to the forming of a steady resolution, upon the principle of enduring as well as acting. He reviewed the past, and the present, with an impartial eye; and where he saw he failed, condemned himself with an inexorable justice.

In this hour's communing with himself, he found how different is the real from the imaginary contest; how wise is speculation, how absurd is practice; how easy profession, how difficult performance; and that, of all conquests, that of reason over a refractory heart is the hardest to acquire. After these humbling reflections, he walked forth a victor (though a wounded one), to cheer himself with the glories of the setting sun. Its reclining orb had never failed to recall the compact which his heart had made, when he beheld it for the last time on the verge of his native hills. But this evening, its mild religious light, gradually withdrawing into the clouds as the golden disc sunk beneath the earth, reminded him so touchedly of the venerable saint, whose emblem he had called it, that he could not forbear exclaiming, —

"Yes, my revered uncle! those pious hands shall not always be raised in vain. I trust that, henceforth, I shall do my duty in a manner more befitting the character you fondly believed mine; but on which, recent experience has too repeatedly shown, how slight ought to have been my dependence. For your sake, dear instructor of my youth! I will do all, and be all, that is required of me. I will forget your graciousness, that, in this land of severity, I may act worthy of your hopes."

For several succeeding weeks, Louis steadily obeyed the law he had enjoined himself. The exasperation of his mind gradually subsided; his awakened sensibilities sunk to repose; and he concentrated his thoughts, as much as possible, upon his unchanging toil. As he now passed part of every day in the open air, he found companions, and even social ones, in the birds he fed with the crumbs from his breakfast. Their grateful chirpings were cheering; and, as he paced the snows of the garden, his blood regained its vigour, and the elasticity of his spirits revived. Again his cheek wore the brightness of health; and his

volant step too often reminded him how narrow were his boundaries. His eye, however, was yet free to range; and its excursions were wide as the horizon. It sought the heights of Mount Calemberg, the hoary summits of which mingled with the hazy west; or, when the winter day put on a fairer garb, he contemplated their snowy peaks, piercing the glittering sky, and clothed in all its splendour. A little convent, like *Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,* stood in an umbrageous cleft of the mountain; where the now icicled trees, and frozen stream, promised a luxurious scene in verdant summer.

But Mount Calemberg, with all its beauties, was not as fair to him as cloud-capt Cheviot, clad in her storms, and standing sublime amidst the roaring torrent, and the shouts of the hunters echoing from her hills. He sighed for the joyous chase, for the jocund hour of return. He thought the voices of his uncle's boon companions would no more sound discordant in his ear: even for the cry of their dogs, and their own loud halloos, reverberating from the walls of old Bamborough, what would he now give!

"Churl that I was," cried he, "not to allow people to be happy, but in my own way! And fool, too, to despise them for being happy, with the humbler talents bestowed on them by the God of nature."

Louis blushed to feel, that we must lose, to value all that is bestowed.

His wandering eye could not elude the attraction of another point. It often turned to the yet frozen Danube; and tried, by straining its powers, to discern, amongst the variegated groups, any thing like the person of his interdicted friend; but he gazed in vain. The river was too distant to distinguish individuals; and all he saw was a moving pageantry, which might interest, but could never satisfy him; as it was probable it contained Wharton; and it was impossible to see him from the terrace, if it did.

Louis was constant in these walks; and the Sieur, as regular in his evening visits. The one always greeted his governor with cheerfulness; and the other, his pupil, with a stateliness which showed approbation, — by silence from

reproof. But Louis was determined on content; and the whole went smoothly on.

The name of Wharton never occurred between them to disturb the unruffled surface, but once; and that was occasioned by the Duke's parting letter to Louis, dropping out of his private portfolio one evening, when Ignatius asked if he could furnish him with a sheet of paper bearing the English water-mark. As the letter fell with the seal to the floor, the Sieur's observing eye recognised the handwriting; and, though unused to the bending mood, he stooped to take it up.

"You have corresponded with Wharton!" cried he, holding the letter in his hand; "what did he tell you was his object in leaving England last autumn?"

"Nothing, sir," replied Louis, stretching out his hand rather too eagerly to receive the letter; but Ignatius retained it. "That was the first, and the only letter, with which he has ever honoured me."

"It is in answer, then, to one from yourself?"

"No; I have never written to him. That was sent to me the night he quitted England, to go —— he did not say whither; and so the correspondence ended."

"And, as certainly, he did not desire its continuance," replied the Sieur. He observed Louis start, and redden, with an air of offended incredulity. "Else why," resumed Ignatius, "did he omit naming to you the place of his destination? But," added the subtle questioner, throwing the letter contemptuously on the table, "Wharton was always a creature of caprice; and you will not be the last ball his racket will strike out of his caring."

Stung with the sarcasm of this remark; mortified at being supposed liable to such trifling; and jealous for the sincerity of his friend; with flashing eyes Louis took up the letter, and held it silently in his hand. He stood a few minutes, struggling to subdue the resentment that was rising to his lips. The Sieur appeared to have already forgotten the matter, and was calmly examining the manuscripts on the table. This apathy was more galling than, perhaps, further remark. Louis pressed on his swelling

heart the recollection of the vow he had made to himself, *to bear all*, as well as *to do all*, the will of this arrogant man; and, turning towards his portfolio, he was replacing the letter in the case, when Ignatius, looking up, said, in a voice that was careless of being heard, —

"It is pity to see ingenuous youth treasure a counterfeit for true metal."

"Your observation, sir," said Louis, "does not touch the Duke of Wharton."

"But it might you, Louis," coolly answered the Sieur; "for you hold a proof of his ephemeral attachments in your hand."

Louis felt an instant impulse to disprove, at once, this contemptuous inference, by requesting Ignatius to read the Duke's letter; but the next moment he bethought him whether there were aught in the contents, his misjudged friend might wish not to be exposed to an enemy. For such, he could not but perceive, the inveterate Ignatius was to Wharton. There was a mixture of malignant contempt, with evident apprehension of his influence somewhere, which marked the sentiment the Sieur entertained for him; but whether from personal dislike, or solely on account of the asserted hostility between him and Baron de Ripperda, Louis could not be sure; though he certainly saw hatred in his governor's deeply sunken eyes, whenever he spoke of the Duke.

To persist in silence, seemed, to Louis, to be sanctioning these calumnies on his friend; and to continue asserting, without offering proof, he was aware, would only redouble the scorn of his antagonist. Placed in a torturing dilemma, he stood recollecting whether the contents of the Duke's letter were such that he might safely show; when the Sieur, rising from his seat, said, in an exasperating tone of pity, "Put up your relic, Louis! though I see you are properly ashamed of a credulity, too natural to the vanity of youth."

"No, sir," returned he, opening the letter with a trembling hand; "I should detest myself, if I thought I had a spark within me, of any thing so mean as vanity. But if I had, Duke Wharton is of too noble a nature to play

upon credulity so worthless. That letter, sir, if you will condescend to read it, will show you that I am honoured with his friendship."

Ignatius had now wrought Louis to the point at which he aimed; but, maintaining his air of indifference, he took the letter from the agitated hand of his pupil without observation. Louis presented it with a proud look, and stood, as proudly, watching his countenance while he read it. The Sieur went over it twice; he then coldly returned it, with the remark, "It is beyond my skill, to expound so curious a riddle; but, as you are his friend, you doubtless have a key?"

All the self-confidence, which a moment before had dilated the indignant heart of Louis, fell in an instant. He did not anticipate this sort of observation on the letter; and, alarmed at the impressions which must have given rise to it, he stood in speechless embarrassment.

"This piece of paper," continued Ignatius, "is mere nonsense to me; and proves nothing of what you wish to prove, unless you can do it by explaining its meaning."

Louis remained silent.

The Sieur proceeded:—"You ought not to have put such seeming foolery into my hands, unless you were prepared to be its commentary."

"Then return it to me, sir," cried Louis, overwhelmed with confusion, "and forget that you have seen it."

"I never forget any thing that I have seen; nor am I to be trifled with. You have called my attention to this letter; you have shown it to me as a proof of Duke Wharton's confidence in you: but I see only a farrago of words, which you have now pledged yourself to put into reasonable meaning, by your explanation."

Louis's consternation was so great at so unlooked-for a consequence of what he had done, that he could not recollect what he had said, or might have implied, to the Sieur; and he continued to gaze on the ground, humbled to the dust. "Oh!" cried he, in the depth of his soul, "was I then under the immediate control of detested, mischievous vanity, at the very moment I disclaimed its presence in my heart? Wretch that I am, to have been betrayed, by any

motive, to open the faintest glimmering of light upon the secrets of my friend to this inexorable man!"

The recollection of Wharton's words, *I put my life into your hands!* rose before Louis's mental sight in characters of blood; and, turning sick at heart, he supported a momentary failure of his limbs, by grasping the back of a chair. The sight of this agitation only stimulated the curiosity of Ignatius, or whatever else it was, to persecute his unoffending charge to the utmost point of distress. The Sieur resumed.

"You have gone too far to be silent now. I can comprehend, that certain phrases in this enigmatical epistle refer to former conferences with you. Brutus and Cassius are not, usually, masquing names in affairs of gallantry; therefore the nature of your mutual confidence I can guess; and it is necessary for your own, as well as for the Duke's honour, that you tell me their object."

"Sir," said Louis, "I have already done too much for my own honour. The Duke's can never be injured by any thing I can say or withhold. And I will mention his name no more."

"Young man," said Ignatius, "you must not add obstinacy to rashness. You have allowed yourself to be made privy to the schemes of a man who is suspected by his country! Be aware, that to conceal treason is to share it."

Louis did not speak.

The Sieur continued:—"Besides, you are answerable to your country, and to your father, who has devoted you with himself, to her interests, to reveal to him, as to your confessor, every event of your life; much more, then, a circumstance like this. For on your father's intimate acquaintance with every political device which could possibly disturb Europe, depends his guiding, to perfection, the mighty machine he is now constructing, to give peace to the world. Hence the glory of your father, as well as your vow to Spain, commands you to bend all minor considerations to the great duty of your life; and to confide to him, through me, every confidence, of a political nature, which has passed between you and the Duke of Wharton."

"The glory of my father," replied Louis, "can never

be augmented by his son's faithlessness. And, could Spain require such a proof of my attachment to her, the law of God, which is the everlasting appeal from all human ordinances, would sanction me in abjuring my vow!"

"You grant that Wharton has engaged your faithfulness! A secret implied, is a secret revealed; and further withholding a full acknowledgment, is finesse with me, and irreverence to your father. The Duke left Vienna a few weeks ago, secretly; and, I have reason to believe, you could guess whither he is gone."

"Sir," answered Louis, "I neither say, nor do not say, that I have been honoured with any confidence, whatever, by the Duke of Wharton; but I repeat, that neither to my father, nor to any man living, do I think it necessary to betray a trust in me. Therefore, as I cannot repeat discourses I have never heard, and will not repeat discourses confided to me, you cannot be surprised that I hold my peace. My inconsideration, to give it the mildest appellation, has gone far enough, in showing Duke Wharton's letter, however indifferent its subject, without his permission."

The Sieur fixed his investigating eye upon the determined brow of his pupil.

"Louis de Montemar," cried he, "you have imprudence enough in your composition to ruin a state, and sufficient stubbornness, of what you call honour, to ensure your own destruction. If you do not mean to relax the one, you must learn to confirm your mind against the wild influence of the other. Act less from passion, and more from principle. Be wary of friend, as well as foe; and never speak from your heart, till your words have paused in your head, to take the judgment of your circumspection. Had you shown this letter to one less interested in your welfare than your father's friend, the suspicion its style would have awakened might have wrought consequences ruinous to the Duke, and not much less full of evil to yourself. I shall now drop the subject, because I see you will not neglect its lesson."

With the gratitude of one escaped from a snare into which, he thought, he had desperately, and therefore blame-

ably, rushed, Louis took the letter, which the Sieur presented to him. His ingenuous cheek flushed with displeasure at himself for having been beguiled, rather than at the subtle trier of his wariness; and respectfully, though silently, he bowed his head to his unanswerable monitor. Ignatius fell immediately into his usual abstracted mood, and soon after left the room.

CHAPTER XV.

THREE days after this discussion, Louis had just seated himself at his morning task, when he heard a knock at the chamber door. This was an unusual circumstance, for Gerard never approached with such a signal, but at the hours when his stroke was to announce the frugal repast in the adjoining apartment. The Sieur always entered with his own key; and this was a time of the day he never visited the château. Louis thought it could be no summons to him, and that probably Gerard had accidentally occasioned the noise in passing. But in another minute he heard a second knock, louder than the former. He then rose to see what it was, and to his surprise beheld Castanos, whom he had not seen, nor heard of, since his departure with the despatches for Spain.

Hoping to hear news of his father, and that his letter to Don Ferdinand had reached him in safety, Louis eagerly bade the secretary welcome from Madrid. With a deepened gloom on his always sullen countenance, Castanos roughly interrupted him—

"I am sent to tell you, Señor, that the Sieur Ignatius is at the point of death."

"Impossible!" cried Louis: "he was not here yesterday; but I saw him the evening before, in perfect health."

"Last night he was stabbed in the porch of the Jesuits' College," returned Castanos.

Louis's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, as, grasping the arm of his unfeeling informant, he seemed to de-

mand, who had done it? For once in his life, the morose Spaniard suffered his half-closed eyes to look directly on the face of a fellow-creature. He was not insensible to the horror depicted on Louis, and in more humane accents replied—

"Villains way-laid him in the porch at the outer gate of the College, where he always quits his carriage. They closed on him; but he struggled, and drew his dagger. The business, however, was soon over; for the stroke of some heavy weapon felled him to the ground; and while he lay insensible, they stabbed him and fled. But the drawn blood did a service not intended. It recovered my Lord Ignatius from his swoon; and he managed to stagger to the gate, and gain admittance. When I was sent for to his chamber, which was not till morning, I found surgeons and a priest with him; and they declare his wounds dangerous."

"And am I not to see him?" cried Louis, forgetting his hard task-master, in the image of a fellow-creature dying by murder; that fellow-creature was his father's friend! and he repeated, "May I not see him?"

"I came to bring you to him," replied Castanos.

Shocked as he was by the horrid recital, Louis felt an emotion of pleasure at this summons. To be to his severe, but, he believed, upright guardian, a more soothing attendant than was in the power, if indeed in the will, of the rugged Spaniard, gave a generous satisfaction to his heart. Having carefully locked the chamber, which contained the secret papers; that, whether the Sieur lived or died, his injunctions might be equally respected; Louis accompanied his old conductor to a carriage, which awaited them in the court-yard.

While driving down the avenue, and through the suburb, into the city, both Louis and his companion were lost in thought. At last, the former, hardly conscious of giving utterance to his meditations, suddenly asked Castanos, whether he had any idea of the motive of this horrid deed.

"Not robbery," replied the Spaniard; "they never stopped for plunder. They wanted his life. And, I be-

lieve, we may curse the jealousy of your father's political enemies for the motive. I brought my despatches from Madrid yesterday morning; and yesterday night these daggers were at work."

"But how," returned Louis, "can the death of the Sieur Ignatius be of such moment to my father's enemies, that they should load their souls with this assassination, and leave my father alive?"

"Señor," said Castanos, "you know little of politicians. The agents of such rivals are always in danger. So you will do well to look to yourself."

"No man knows me in this capital."

"But some may know your employment; and that is the object of grudge. Since the stiletto has reached our master, we know not how far it may be from ourselves."

Louis could not bid him not fear; for the assault on their employer proved that danger was connected with their situation; and, being ignorant of what that situation really was, he could not foresee whence the danger might issue, nor how it might be repelled. He therefore made no reply; neither did he ask any more questions of a man, who, when he did break his sullen taciturnity, was evermore inclined to increase the gloom of an evil prospect, than to cheer it with a glimpse of hope.

The silence that ensued, was not interrupted, till the carriage drew up before a colossal column, surmounted by a bronze statue of the Virgin Mary; and in front of which stretched the dark walls of the College. At the portico they alighted.

"Here," muttered Castanos, "is the place of blood; and its marks are yet on the stones."

As he said, Louis saw; for it might be tracked, from the spot where he supposed the Sieur had fallen, to where he rose, and made his way to the gate. Louis shuddered at such a proof of the most dreadful part of the Spaniard's tale, and hastened to follow him through the porch. He entered a large quadrangle, surrounded by cloisters. As they proceeded, Louis perceived several persons in dark monastic habits, walking to and fro under the colonnades. When he approached, they eyed him with curiosity; and

when two or three were together, they whispered as he passed. Castanos seemed vexed by this notice; but, without remarking on it, hurried his companion towards a great door at the extremity of one of the cloisters. He struck it with his clenched hand, and it was instantly opened by a man, whom Louis recognised to be Martini; the servant, who had attended him in his only walk beyond the walls of the château. He immediately enquired, whether the Sieur had undergone any change since Castanos left him.

"No, Signor." The Superior of the College is with him now; but he is impatient for your arrival."

"Show me to his apartment," cried Louis; and, following the fleet steps of the Italian, the father of the Jesuits met him, as he passed into the presence of the wounded Ignatius.

The chamber was, then, left entirely to the invalid; and to the conference he had so strenuously desired to have with his young secretary. Louis advanced into the room. Ignatius lay on a low couch, which, from its form and sombre appointments, looked more like a bier for the dead, than a bed of rest for the living. It stood in the centre of an arched cove, at the end of the apartment. Louis approached in speechless awe. As he drew near, he saw the body of the Sieur extended under the coverlid, in the position he should have expected, had he been to find him in his shroud. His head lay flat on the pillow, and was so veiled in a black cowl, nothing could be discerned of his face, but his ashy lips and grizzled beard.

Ignatius guessed the step, that so cautiously drew near his bed; and, feebly raising the arm, which, his pupil now saw, had lain enveloped in black upon the dark coverlid, extended his hand. Louis clasped it gently in his, but forbore to speak. He felt himself pressed by the cold fingers of Ignatius; and there was an expression in the touch, that said, he understood his sympathy. Louis bent his head to that not silent hand, and put it to his lips.

"Son of Ripperda," said the Sieur, in a low agitated voice; "thou hast a kindly heart!"

"The son of Ripperda," replied Louis, "could not feel otherwise towards the friend of his father. But I would

devote myself to watch this couch, for the Sieur Ignatius's own sake." Again he felt his hand pressed by the wounded man; and the smile, which was once so beautiful, flitted over his shrouded countenance like a departing spirit. Louis turned icy cold. He had never seen any one on a death-bed; and that spectacle, which he believed was now before him, shivered him to the soul.

"Louis," said the Sieur, after a pause, "I have not summoned you hither, to wait upon the tedious hours of my recovery; but to perform my part, in the place, where jealousy of my success has brought me to this. You must go to the Imperial palace: — I am expected there in the course of an hour; for none, there, yet know of this assassination. You must see the Empress, and acquaint her with what has happened. With difficulty, I have written these few hardly legible lines, to assure her she may trust you with any confidential message to me; and she too well knows my writing, to doubt their authenticity. My surgeons say little to encourage hope; but tell her Majesty, I feel a life in my heart, that her enemies, and mine, have not been able to reach!"

Ignatius spoke this at intervals, checked, at each sentence, by internal spasms from his most dangerous wound. But he showed a vehemence at the close, which his pupil had never before witnessed in his tempered discourse. More than his usual caution seemed taken from his lips; and, as Louis apprehended the approach of delirium, he felt the hand which still clasped his, flash at once into a scorching heat. The agitated speaker gasped for breath; but he began again, and, with rapid utterance, went through a train of directions, to guide his pupil in his conference with the Empress. In the midst of the most energetic part of his discourse, his lip became convulsed, he suddenly stopped, and dropping the hand he held, seemed seized by the grasp of death. Louis sprang forward to give air to the enveloped face, but the moment Ignatius felt the attempt to withdraw his cowl, he arrested the hand that touched it, and said in a stifled voice, — "Do not be alarmed; I am not dying, but in pain. The villains struck well, but not quite home!" — He paused for a few minutes; evidently to col-

lect strength, to finish his commands. "Go," resumed he, "you will find Martini in the antechamber. He has my orders to attend you to the palace. You will then be conducted to the Altheim apartments: show that card to the page at the door, (it is written by the Empress's own hand, to admit the possessor,) and he will immediately obey its command. In those apartments you will see the Imperial Elizabeth."

Louis had been under no inconsiderable degree of surprise during many parts of this discourse. Until now, he had supposed that the agency of Ignatius, was directed to some of the Austrian ministers, whom his father, probably, wished to bring over to the present views of Spain. He could hardly have suspected, that so much caution, and peril, could be connected with any negotiation, in which the sovereigns themselves were principals; and, that they should be principals, was astonishing in itself. The Emperor's claims on the throne of Spain, and Philip's repugnance to the Austrian possession of the Netherlands, united with the pertinacious character of the two monarchs, and the usual turn of human passions, would have made Louis affirm, that no political adversaries could have been more naturally irreconcilable to amity between them, beyond occasional shows of peace.

However, the Sieur Ignatius had borne a reverse testimony. His pupil could not doubt what he had said; and, taking the credential presented to him, he was rising to withdraw, when the wounded man impressively added, — "Remember, she, alone, knows that my secretary is Louis de Montemar. In the guard-room, you will hear yourself announced as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg."

Louis stood silent, without moving another pace to the door: "Oh!" thought he, "another deception! How can that be right, which requires so much wrong to support it?"

The Sieur did not see this hesitation; for the wound in his head incapacitated him from bearing the light; but, not hearing a footstep, he guessed what was passing in his pupil's mind. "Louis," cried he, "you must not cross me at an hour like this, with your romantic prejudices.

Should any want of caution discover you to the eye or ear of an enemy, the blow, that has only half reached me, may be made sure; and the failure of our scheme, at this crisis, would sink your father's fame in everlasting dishonour."

"Oh! sir," returned Louis, "I cannot connect dishonour, with a scheme of virtue, whatever may be its fortune! Is not my father labouring for the happiness of Spain? For the peace of the world? If I had no other repugnance, I cannot but shrink from resigning, even for an instant, such a name as his."

"Louis," resumed the Sieur, his voice and manner evidently raised by growing fever, "it is now in your power, and in yours alone, to keep that name your distinction, or to brand it as your disgrace. Schemes of policy have no character in the public mind, but according to their issue. If success attend this of the Baron de Ripperda, it will be sounded as a blessing to the nations; if it fail, obloquy will proclaim it a conspiracy, worthy their curses. Concealment now, is present preservation, and victory hereafter. Remember, once for all, that diplomatic simulation is no falsehood. It is expected; and is no more a breach of honour, than an ambuscade in war. You *are the Chevalier de Phaffenberg,* as long as you possess its château!" added he, with a derisive motion of his lip; "and thus we provide for consciences of more sensibility than judgment. If there be sin, it is on my head and your father's! Be satisfied with this, and depart on your duty."

Louis placed his hand on his heart, as he replied, "My honour cannot be satisfied by a quibble; nor my conscience, with the responsibility of another man. But, it is possible I may overstrain the principles I hope to live and die in; therefore I obey."

As he left the room, the virtuous pupil of the pious minister of Lindisfarne folded his hands together, and inwardly exclaimed, "These are labyrinths, he never expected me to tread! and, may the God I would not offend, be the guide of my lips and of my actions!"

When Louis entered the antechamber, Castanos was sitting on a low bench, sulkily smoking a cigar, and Martini stood near him, discoursing in a suppressed voice, but

with vehement gesticulation. On hearing the steps of Louis, the latter turned, and caught up his hat. "I am at your command, Signior;" and without waiting for an order, he led the way, through the cloisters, to the porch where the carriage stood. Louis stepped in; and the Italian followed, with the air of a man who had been trusted with a confidence of no mean bearing.

They drove on; and, by the looks which Martini occasionally threw towards him, Louis easily perceived his eagerness to be encouraged to speak. Martini was as anxious to be always an orator, as Castanos to maintain the character of a mute. But, in the present case, Louis was too much possessed, with what he had just seen, and what he might soon have to do, to be in humour to gratify the loquacity of any person. In proportion as his frank countenance was inviting to conversation, when he had no inclination to repel it; a dignified reserve, which few persons would dare disturb, occupied every feature, when he wished to be left to his own thoughts. There was nothing severe in the look, but it had the air of one accustomed to deference; and, though Martini would rather have met the social smile which Louis wore on the Danube, he saw every thing to respect, but nothing to fear, in the tacit command of his countenance.

Attentive to the Sieur's minutest injunctions, when Louis stepped from the carriage into the palace, he folded his pelisse round him; and, drawing the fur of his winter-cap down upon his face, walked on, with little more than his eyes visible. At the door of the guard-chamber, Martini announced the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, who required to be conducted to the Altheim apartments. The officer in waiting called a person to show Louis the way; and, as he turned to follow his guide, Martini said aloud, "Chevalier, I wait you in this chamber."

The man led him up the imperial staircase to a superb rotunda, the pillared arcades of which branched in all directions into long galleries of equal magnificence. Through several of these they took their way; and, in some of them, a few persons were seen passing lightly and silently along, as if in the anxious discharge of different sorts of attend-

ance on the numerous august inhabitants. Louis thought of the palace of Thebes; and, as the smirking lips, but troubled brows, of these people met his eye, he could not but think how base and how miserable is the coveted bread of dependence.

He approached another of the folding doors which had led him from gallery to gallery; and on opening this, his guide told the page within to conduct the Chevalier de Phaffenberg to the Altheim apartment.

"By what authority?" asked the page.

The person from the guard-room had turned away on his return; but Louis, without speaking, presented the passport from the Empress. The youth bowed profoundly, and ushered the bearer through a highly ornamented vestibule into a suite of splendid apartments; in one of them he made a second obeisance, and left his charge. The Sieur had instructed him to show the imperial signature; not to ask for any body, but patiently to wait in this her private *boudoir* the arrival of the Empress. He had, therefore, leisure to look around him; had his mind been sufficiently free from solicitude to derive amusement from the endless decorations of the place. In one part appeared a seemingly interminable conservatory, blooming with all the flowers of summer; in another, opened a deep alcove of entire mirror, which doubled the mimic garden; and, in an opposite direction, a stretch of canopied arches discovered chamber after chamber, till the most capricious fancy might be sated with variety.

Louis's eye hardly glanced along them, for he fell, almost immediately, into an awful meditation on the scene he had just left; on the probable death of the mysterious Ignatius; and, in the event of such a catastrophe, what might be the consequence to his father. Would the loss of so efficient an agent compel him to abandon his views? or, would he come to Vienna, and finish, in person, what his murdered friend had so well begun? At the close of these melancholy cogitations, nothing but gloomy images presented themselves; the dark-cowled priests, flitting around the bed of the dying Ignatius; and the dismal voice of Castanos, presaging a similar fate to the Baron himself! In

the midst of these thoughts, he was startled by a sound in the adjoining chamber. He looked towards it, and saw a lady, splendidly attired, approaching him. Unused to courts, he hesitated, whether he should go forward, or await her advance; but, as she drew near, the amazing beauty he beheld, decided for him, and struck him motionless.

He had heard that the Empress was beautiful and young; but, of any thing like this bloom of youth, this splendour of beauty, he had no expectation. It was more like the dream of the poet, than any *mortal mixture of earth's mould!* He stood, as one lost to recollection. The lady did not seem less surprised, though certainly with less amazement. On her first approach to him, when he took his cap from his head, and his disengaged pelisse, falling back, discovered his youthful figure, she retreated a step; but the next moment advancing, with a smile of peculiar complacency, she observed, "There must be some mistake; I came to meet a totally different person."

Louis tried to recover himself, from the admiration her beauty had excited, to the ceremonial due to her rank; and bowing with disordered grace, he replied, "that he was sent by the person, he believed her Majesty expected to meet in that chamber; and, that he came a messenger of distressing tidings; — to say, that the Sieur Ignatius had been attacked by ruffians; and was, then, lying in extremity, at the Jesuits' College."

The lady interrupted him; — "Sir," said she, "you have done me the honour to mistake me for her, whom I am so happy to serve; and, being distinguished by my imperial mistress's confidence, I came hither, to request the Sieur Ignatius (whose attendance she had required at this hour) to excuse her absence for a few minutes. Her Majesty is with the Emperor; and, when I have delivered your message, she will expect you to await her commands."

With these words, the lady curtseyed and withdrew.

Louis gazed on the track, through which she had disappeared. A vision of some heavenly creature seemed to have passed before him. The apparition, the voice, had

been seen, and heard; but all was, again, solitude and silence! Was it possible, he asked himself, that any thing mortal could be so perfectly beautiful? that any thing earthly should be too bright to look upon? Lost in the amazement of his senses, he thought only of her; he had forgotten the majesty he came to visit, and, almost the disastrous tale that was his errand, when steps again sounded in the adjoining apartment. He sprang towards the canopied arch; the curtains were held back by two golden caryates, and his eager eye shot beyond; but another form appeared! another lady! of beauty too; but, blinded by excess of light, all other objects seemed dark and indistinct before him.

She was less magnificently arrayed than her fair messenger, but approached with so striking an air of dignity, that Louis could not hesitate in believing this must be the Empress. Respectfully meeting her advancing steps, he bent his knee to her, as he presented the letter from the Sieur. At the moment of her approach, his bewildered faculties suddenly recollected, that such was the attitude, Ignatius told him, he must assume in delivering his credentials.

The Empress stood still, and looked steadfastly on him for several moments. Then, taking the letter from his hand, in a voice of tender commiseration she bade him rise.

"The lady, I sent hither, has informed me of your melancholy embassy," continued she, in the same gracious tone; "but, I trust, he is not wounded past hope?"

"Not past his own," replied Louis, as he rose from his knee; "but the surgeons are less sanguine."

With a troubled countenance the Empress opened the letter, and read it hastily. She looked from its contents to its bearer, and fixing her sweet but penetrating eyes anxiously on his face, said, in a doubting voice, "You are young, very young, for the trust I am called upon to confide to you!" Still she looked on him, and still she spoke; evidently without consciousness, uttering the remarks her observing mind was passing upon his appearance. "A youth like you must be too fond of pleasure, to be a secure

confidant! Too accessible—too much in the power of circumstances. And, at such a crisis too! But he tells me I may trust you as his son!"

Again she looked full at him. Louis's whole soul was fixed on that look, and aroused by its occasion. That the rigid Ignatius had given such testimony of him, did not more surprise, than determine him to perish rather than dishonour it. He did not venture to speak, but the expression of his eloquent countenance was more than a thousand vows to Elizabeth.

She sighed deeply, and, sitting down by a table, leaned her head upon her hand. Louis remained standing where she had left him, regarding her with respectful interest. At last she looked up, and waved her hand to him to approach her.

"My heart is heavy," said she, "with the tidings you have brought me. For, should my counsellor in all this be indeed taken from me, how incalculable are the difficulties into which I shall be plunged! Nothing, but full and complete success in the end, can excuse me to my family, and to the world, for the perils I incur in the progress."

Louis was silent. Elizabeth resumed.

"You know, to what I allude?"

"I know nothing," replied he, "but what the Sieur Ignatius has told me; and that is, a general intimation of his possessing your Majesty's confidence; and, that jealousy of so high a distinction, he suspects to be the cause of his present state."

The Empress took two or three turns up and down the room. She was harassed, and undecided; and often turned, to look again, and again, upon the youthful secretary. She suddenly stopped.

"Did Ignatius tell you, who I knew you to be?"

"He did. — That I am the son of the Baron de Ripperda."

As he made this simple reply, the dignity he felt in being the son of such a father, seemed to encircle his brow with the before veiled diadem of all his princely ancestors.

"And where is your father?" asked the Empress.

"At Madrid. And I cannot doubt that at such a mo-

ment he would be eager to hasten to the feet of the Empress Elizabeth, the generous truster in his friend!"

The Empress shook her head.—"Alas, alas!" cried she; and again she walked from Louis with a hurrying pace. For some time she continued murmuring to herself, in a voice so low that he could not distinguish what she said; but at last, drawing near him, she again threw herself into a chair, and spoke aloud. "You call me the generous truster in his friend! I will be that to his son also. There is an honesty in your countenance, an enthusiasm in your manner, so unlike a courtier, that, — I cannot but believe you trustworthy! and, when *he* says it," added she, pressing the Sieur's letter in her hand, "it is conviction. Hearken, then, to me."

Louis drew near: and the Empress, in a low, but steady voice, imparted to him certain subjects of national dispute between the empires of Germany and of Spain; and personal rivalries between their respective sovereigns; which she, and the Baron de Ripperda, through the secret agency of Ignatius, were labouring to reconcile. She intimated, that her Imperial husband retained so much of his ancient enmity to Philip, and the Austrian ministers were so jealous of yielding advantage to the Spanish cabinet, that she was obliged to move towards her end with the strictest caution. Besides, she had some collateral objects in view, which, if obtained, would not only establish a cordial friendship between the two countries; but so balance the power of the Continent, that war, for this generation at least, could hardly find a plea for disturbing the tranquillity of Europe.

"Some of these plans," added she, "are more than suspected by my enemies, and the enemies of my child; and, since they have engaged a certain wily English Duke in their interest, an hour does not pass over my head without a dread of the whole being blown into the air. Like an evil spirit, he can transport himself when and wherever he pleases; and, while he is invisible, work a train of mischief that is felt through many nations. It was only yesterday that he returned from one of his secret flights; from Paris, I suspect——" She suddenly paused and appeared to muse for a few minutes.

Louis's blood chilled at this mention of an English Duke From what Ignatius had said to him, he was compelled to think the Empress could mean no other than Wharton. And, how strange it was, that every person who had named the Duke to him with censure, had all concurred in giving him some epithet of duplicity.

Elizabeth looked up, with an abrupt demand of her auditor, whether he thought the assassination might not be traceable to Duke Wharton?

"Madam," returned Louis, "I should as soon suspect it from my own hand."

She gazed on him, astonished.

"Yes!" repeated he, in a determined voice; "though it is possible that Duke Wharton may be hostile to your Majesty's politics, and even be the personal enemy of the Sieur Ignatius; yet, I know him too well, not to stake my head on his abhorrence of a crime like this."

The Empress did not withdraw her penetrating eyes from his face.

"I now remember," said she, "that it was he who spread the report at the *Favorita*, that the Baron de Ripperda's son was at Vienna. He met you on the Danube. But Ignatius assured me, you had never seen him since!"

"I never have; and I never will, while he is an object of suspicion to your Majesty, and to my father's friend. But I must again aver, as I would at the judgment-day, that Duke Wharton is incapable of assassination."

"He shall be the better for your vindication," returned the Empress. And then entering into a detailed communication of what her new confidant was to impart to Ignatius, relative to the most open part of their scheme, she gave him a letter, which she wrote and sealed in his presence, to acquaint the Sieur with the recent progress of their more secret views. When she put it into the hand of Louis, she said with much emotion, "The last courier from Madrid wrought so favourably on the Emperor, that I was even now conversing with him in the highest spirits, when I was called to hear the danger of my noble coadjutor! Should I lose him at this moment, their daggers had better have reached me! Louis de Montemar, guard his life, as

you would your own. You know not the value of the charge.

Louis received her command, to be in these apartments the next day, at the same hour, to give her tidings of the Sieur. She then presented her hand to him to kiss, in sign of her favour to himself. He touched it on his bent knee; and, as she turned to withdraw, she told him a page should attend him to the guard-room; but he must take such cognizance of the passages, as henceforth to find his way in the palace alone. Again she proceeded to the door, and again she turned round, and said with agitated solemnity, "Should any fatal change occur, come to me to-night. We will discourse together for the last time; and all that I have said in this conference, you must regard as a dream — to be forgotten!"

Louis silently bowed his head, and her Majesty passed on. So crowded were his thoughts, with the events of the last six hours, he hardly noted the time, though he did the situation of the ground, as the promised attendant brought him to the guard-chamber. Martini sprang to meet him; — and a moment after, he had left the mansion of royal splendours and luxury, to seek the cloisters of ascetic, self-forswearing men! All without was darkness and assumed humiliation; but within, dwelt the rulers of kings, the universal dictators, the all-compelling Jesuits. Louis now entered, to visit one of the most extraordinary personages that ever came within their walls; one, to whom the vast machinery was all unfolded, by which these mighty workmen moved and controlled the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

The information which Louis brought to the suffering Ignatius, did not fail to heal the worst wound his enemies had inflicted, suspicion that their machinations had reached the mind of the Emperor. When the surgeons visited their patient in the evening, they gave a more favourable report

on his symptoms with regard to fever, which was the threatening danger of the morning. The manner of his passing the night, they thought, would be decisive for hope or fear, and Louis entreated permission to attend his couch until day.

The Sieur peremptorily put his negative on this proposal. But Louis was steady, in not being denied watching by the side of Castanos in the anteroom. Martini, with a surgeon and a priest, remained all night in the cell of Ignatius; and, that he slept most part of the time, Louis was satisfied; as, with his strictest attention, he could hardly hear a movement within.

Castanos, and his anxious companion, kept true vigils. The act was the same, though the motives were as different as the two men. In one of the dreary pauses of the night, when the intensity of Louis's meditations, on the various objects which bore upon the event of the present hour, had wearied his unrested spirit, he observed Castanos shake the exhausted embers from his pipe; and, desirous of asking some questions respecting the fate of his packet to Don Ferdinand, he thought he could not have a better opportunity; and, while the old Spaniard was twisting out his tobacco, he addressed him in a low voice.

"Señor Castanos," said he, "you were so kind as to deliver a packet from me to Don Ferdinand d'Osorio, into the hands of my father?"

"No," returned the Spaniard; "your father was not at Madrid."

"Then what became of my packet?"

"It was sent, with the despatches, to where he ordered them."

"Then I may assure myself of its safety? — and that my father was well?"

Castanos had resumed his pipe, and made no answer. After the second volume of renewed smoke had wreathed away from his sullen features, Louis addressed him again.

"But, you saw my father, before you left Spain? Under the present anxious circumstances, it would particularly cheer me to know that he is well."

Castanos drew in, and puffed forth another cloud; then

indolently sliding his words out of the unoccupied corner of his mouth, he sulkily replied, " Señor, the less, in the present circumstances, you talk of your father, the better for the object of your anxiety, and for yourself! — Walls have ears."

With this apophthegm he resumed his smoking with redoubled energy, and Louis submitted to the silence imposed.

A few hours more, and the dawn brought a more communicative comforter. Martini issued from the inner chamber, to announce that his master's symptoms now pleased the doctors; for he had just awoke, with little remaining fever. The priest and surgeon soon after appeared, bearing the same testimony, and the latter communicated the Sieur's commands, for the Chevalier de Phaffenberg to attend him immediately.

Though Louis shrunk from answering to the name, yet he hastened to obey. Again Ignatius took his hand; but no longer with the icy tremor of expiring life, nor the burning clasp of raging fever; there was languor, but not death, in the pressure; and, with heartfelt joy, Louis congratulated him on the certain hope of his recovery.

" It is well," replied the Sieur; " and we shall not be ungrateful for it, where thanksgiving is due. But we must now proceed to business. They tell me my wounds are too deep, to give prospect of my quitting this couch for many days. Our affairs will not brook that time. Your duty at the château, and mine at the palace, must continue to be discharged; and you must perform them both."

Louis's assent was as prompt as the delight with which he embraced active service. And, if the idea of the bright form he had seen, only for an instant, did flash across his mind, with a hope of beholding it again, the passing thought was too transient, to debase, with any selfishness, the pure zeal with which he pressed forward to his new duty.

The Sieur then told him to return to the château for certain of the completed papers, and to bring them, without delay, for his further orders. As the carriage was now directed to be always in readiness for the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, Louis found no tardiness in transporting himself back to the château, and thence to the College again.

On his return, he found the surgeons in the invalid chamber, remonstrating with their patient against seeing his secretary again that day. Ignatius was inflexible; and, to prevent increasing the evil, by opposition, on the appearance of the object in dispute, they withdrew. Louis obeyed the beckon of his governor; and, advancing to the side of his bed, received his instructions respecting the papers he had brought. According to command, he disposed them into several packets; and, putting them into as many small leathern bags, sealed them, and addressed them according to orders.

At a particular hour, he was conducted by Martini to a dungeon-like cell, in a distant and obscure quarter of the College; and, there, the Italian introduced him to a grey-headed brother of the order, who had been intrusted by Ignatius with this part of the business. His office was to receive, and to bring in, in succession, the messengers of the correspondence which Louis held in his hand. The venerable Jesuit told him that several were then in waiting, but in separate cells; for no one was to know of the other; and each was conducted out by a different passage.

Louis remained three hours in his gloomy hall of audience, before he had seen every body he ought to see; and had delivered all the packets, of which these people were to be the bearers, to some of the most distant nations in Europe. He gave no further account of the Sieur's absence to these foreigners, than that he was suddenly indisposed. An idea of his danger might have had ruinous effects on the purposes of this various corrrespondence.

As the time drew near for his attendance on the Empress, Louis returned to Ignatius, to receive his further commands. This interview was brief, but pregnant with matter; and included instructions for a conversation with another personage, to whom the Imperial Elizabeth would see the necessity of introducing their young negotiator.

Louis had now no reason to complain of want of trust from those who commanded his services. The Empress was so impatient to hear his report, that he found her awaiting him; and his communications were so satisfactory, that she at once dismissed her worst fears for the Sieur,

and entered into a circumstantial discussion of his message, comparing its expectations with what had passed between the Emperor and herself, on the last overtures brought by Castanos.

She was not the direct agent to her husband in these affairs; for his Majesty had not a suspicion of her interference with any of the ostensible negotiators; therefore, all that she appeared to do, was by, apparently, accidental remarks; but they were so managed, as very often to decide a fluctuating question. He had never admitted the Sieur Ignatius to a personal audience; whom, however, he respected as a Jesuit of talents, employed by the Spanish sovereigns to compromise, secretly, with Sinzendorff, the Imperial chancellor. The Emperor usually talked with the Empress on all that passed between him and Sinzendorff; and she made ample use of her influence, in suggestion and persuasion, towards the leading objects of the Spanish propositions. Besides the brilliancy of her ostensible motive, to see her husband, the second *Cæsar* that would close the *gates of Janus* on mankind! she had two private views, in gratifying the demands of Spain:—to obtain the guarantee of so leading a power to the *pragmatic sanction;* which would establish her own descendants, male or female, on the throne of Germany;—and, to complete the cession of Philip from the cause of James Stuart, by which her near kinsman, George of Brunswick, would be more firmly seated on that of Great Britain.

An active enemy to the first of these projects was then residing at Vienna, in the person of the widowed Electress of Bavaria. Being the daughter of the late Emperor Joseph (who died without a son), she believed, if the *female* line were to inherit, that she, and her posterity, had more right to the succession than any daughter of the present Emperor, who was the younger brother of his predecessor, her father. To avert these claims, the present Emperor, Charles the Sixth, devised the act of settlement (called the *pragmatic sanction*) on his own female posterity, in default of male issue; and to this he was moving every wile of policy, to obtain the guarantee of the great European states. Fonder of artifice than of plain dealing, Charles made pro-

mises he never intended to perform ; though he hoped, by their means, to purchase the acquiescence of his brother monarchs. Spain had been once attempted in this way ; but Philip's resentments against his former rival were not to be appeased. He joined France in thwarting all the Emperor's plans: and, as he not only withheld his assent to the proposed act for the Austrian succession, but was actively hostile to that of the new King of England, the Empress concluded that he extended his animosity to her, being jealous of the further aggrandisement of the House of Brunswick. But, when the Baron de Ripperda, (whose brilliant wit, and diplomatic magnificence at her father's court, had been the first object of her youthful admiration,) — when he quitted Holland for Spain, and gained the confidential ear of its king, then the Spanish cabinet seemed to turn a colder aspect towards the setting star of the Stuarts, and the hopes of the Empress settled on the newly rising minister of Spain.

The same policy which united the friends of the pragmatic sanction, with those of the reigning King of England, brought the supporters of the Bavarian pretensions into joint interest with all the adversaries of the house of Brunswick ; and, consequently, into strict friendship with the intended restorers of the line of James. To keep the negotiation between the sovereigns of Spain and the Empress from the cognizance of these two latter parties, now so determinately united, was indispensable to its ultimate success ; for the Emperor was too jealous of a prince who had once gained over him a great advantage, and too personally attached to ancient Austrian prejudices, not to be very accessible to the diplomatic subtilties of the adverse faction, should they have timely notice to make an attack.

The Empress expressed herself to this effect ; but there were still some secret measures between herself and Ignatius, which she did not think expedient to confide to their young confidant ; and, when she had explained all that she deemed necessary for the present, she told him, he must go to the apartments of Count Sinzendorff, where that minister was now expecting him. She drew from her finger a ring, that the Count knew, and which, on being presented by

Louis, would be sufficient assurance that he was visited by the right person.

"But recollect," said she, "the chancellor is ignorant that you are of more consequence than a mere secretary of Ignatius. I told him your name is Phaffenberg; and take care you do not give him, nor any one else, reason to suspect you have another."

Louis bowed; and her air of cautionary command dilating into a smile, she added, "To-morrow, and every day, attend me here, at the same hour, until perfect recovery restore your guardian to the full performance of his own duty."

The Empress's description of the situation of the chancellor's apartments in the palace, was too accurate for her ambassador to mistake his way; and, without impediment, he found himself ushered into the presence of Count Sinzendorff. He recognised the ring, which the young secretary respectfully put into his hand; and, without preface or circumlocution, entered at once upon the assassination of Ignatius, and the consequences to be drawn from the attempt. To detect the perpetrators was impossible; as the necessity for concealment, in all that related to the negotiation of the Sieur, extended to his person; and to make a stir in search of the ruffians, would only direct the eyes of their employers where to dare a second attack.

The chancellor then opened the communications he wished to be conveyed to Ignatius. They principally consisted of certain demands, besides that for the pragmatic sanction, which his Imperial Majesty persisted in making on the King of Spain, before he would propound to his ministers what he styled the very high requisitions from the Spanish side. The chancellor followed this up with remarks on his own difficulty in preparing the minds of some of the most stubborn of these ministers; saying, he could hardly bring them to apprehend even the possibility of such measures being proposed to them.

From the plain and well-digested discourse of Count Sinzendorff, Louis derived a clear idea of the scheme in negotiation, which, if brought fully into effect, did indeed promise universal benefit. In the constrained confidence of

the Sieur, there was always so much mystery; and in the hurried communications of the Empress, so much confusion; that, until now, he could only see, as afar off, a mass of anticipated events, the misty obscurity of which, rendered some monstrous, and most indistinct. But now, he comprehended not only the magnificence of the mutual greatness of Austria and Spain, but the foundations of prosperity and peace for Europe, so long threatened with the interminable miseries of hereditary wars. His soul, devoted to noble contemplations, was roused to all its wonted ardour by these views; and, vibrating to the tone of his father's declared motive, which the chancellor had incidentally quoted, he made some remarks on the proposed measures, that did not less astonish, than please, that consummate statesman.

Count Sinzendorff saw that it was no hireling secretary Ignatius had despatched to him. The air and language of Louis were too elevated to belong to a man born in dependence; and the chancellor read, in the intelligence of his eye, and the peculiar attention of his countenance, as he respectfully listened to what was said, that he was still unapprenticed to the mechanism of politics. He felt the soul of patriotism; but he was not yet aware of the machinery which, in this world of artifice, must be its body! A few general sentiments of political virtue, uttered by the Count, elicited its purest principles from the lips of Louis. His own glowing words had given the tone he thought he had taken from the chancellor, who, in fact, only admired the enthusiam he reflected, and pitied what he admired. "It is a *first love*, amiable youth!" thought he, "which must give place to a more worldly bride!"

That this singularly noble young man, both in appearance and manner, should have been introduced to him by the Empress, and the Jesuit Ignatius, as a common secretary, and by the name of Phaffenberg, (a family, whose folly and extravagance had long ago sent it into obscurity!) did not so surprise Sinzendorff, as it confirmed his suspicion, that he saw the son of some great man in this interesting novice; and his shrewd guesses did not lead him far from the mark. He smiled inwardly at the deception which the Empress so uselessly thought to put upon his penetration; and determined

to allow her to believe he was as blind as she wished. Before he and the object of his doubts separated, it was fixed, that every night, at an hour before midnight, the latter should attend in the chancellor's apartments, to be the medium of communication between him, Ignatius, and the Empress.

When Louis returned from his long and double embassy, all he had to impart was listened to without interruption. For, when he began his recital, the Sieur apprised him, that, in transactions of this nature, it was so necessary to recapitulate every word which had passed, and, as nearly as possible, to describe the manner of saying it, that he would not confuse his recollection by a single interrupting remark. When Louis finished speaking, all his guardian said, was —"It is well;" and then bade him return to the château for the remainder of the night.

He had a task to perform there before he slept; and similar ones would, henceforth, lengthen his visits to a late hour, every evening, as long as his double duty lasted. He was to register all that was said in his presence by the Empress and the chancellor. And he was to make duplicates of this diary into the cypher he had been so long accustomed to copy; and to understand which, the Sieur now gave him a key. Every night he was to return to the château, and every morning make his appearance at the College.

The two following days passed in the same round of duties. But there was a difference in the third which made it remarkable to Louis, and gave a new character to those which succeeded it. He again beheld the beautiful friend of Elizabeth.

Not having seen her since her first transit across his, then, cheerless sky, the starry brightness of that glance only occurred to him, afterwards, like the fading image of a delightful dream. Absorbed in the great interests which now occupied him, he was thinking of nothing less than her, when, on entering the *boudoir* to await the Empress, he was surprised to see her accustomed chair filled by another lady, and a lovely girl, sitting by her, busily employed at the table. He started, and the lady, hastily throwing back a lace veil, which had shaded her face, as she bent over her

companion, discovered the beautiful creature he hardly expected to see again. She apologized for having permitted her own, and the Archduchess's occupations, to make her forget the hour in which these rooms ought to be left to his use; and, taking the Princess's arm, had even passed into the next chamber before he could recollect himself so much, as to feel that he stood like an idiot, without having uttered a word of the commonest civility, in answer to her graceful address. He then flew after her, and spoke, he knew not what, in explanation of his remissness; all the while, walking by her side in a strange disorder of feelings; till, reaching a small door in almost the farthest apartment, she turned round, and, with a dignified bend of the neck and a dimpled smile, granted him her pardon, and disappeared with her fair charge.

Louis paused a moment, looking at the closed door through which she had passed; and then returned to the *boudoir*, with his senses all in amaze. His heart, which had never, till now, beat at the sight of womankind, throbbed in his breast almost audibly. Such an eye, as its soft lustre fell upon him, he had never met before; he felt its rays in his heart. And then so finely composed a figure! Such matchless grace in her shape and snowy arms, as she led the young Princess along! And the golden tresses, which mingled with the white veil upon her neck, made him think of the peerless Helen, whose divine beauties compelled the admiration of the very empire she destroyed!

Full of these imaginations, the more he thought, the further did his mind wander from the business which brought him there: and, when the Empress did make her appearance, it was with difficulty that he recalled his senses to the subjects of the interview. In one of her pauses she noticed his abstraction. She remarked it to him. A bright crimson flashed over his face. She repeated her enquiries. Louis was astonished at his own emotion; but, without seeking other excuse, though with deepening colour, he said, he had behaved rudely to a lady who had just left that apartment: but he was surprised at meeting any but her Majesty; and he had not yet recovered from his confusion.

Elizabeth bade him describe the lady. To do that, he felt was impossible; though, on the demand, his ready heart repeated its pulsations; and looking down, he merely answered, "She was with the Archduchess." The Empress smiled. She now knew whom he had seen; and, by his disorder, had no difficulty in guessing the cause of his abstraction.

"The lady," returned she, "is the Countess Altheim; to whose care these apartments are consigned, as my first *lady of the key*. She is also the governess of my eldest daughter, whom you saw; and whom, I wish her to model after her own graces!"

Louis unconsciously sighed, as he bowed to this information; and Elizabeth, thinking she understood his meaning, with a smile still more gracious than the former, added—"She is a widow, though so young;—and has, hitherto, loved me too well to be persuaded from my service, by any one of the numerous solicitors for her hand."

Louis felt another impertinent sigh rising to his lips, but he smothered it with a gentle effort, saying inwardly—"What is all this to me?" and made no answer to the Empress, but a second bow. She immediately passed to the subject of his audience.

In returning to the College, he would not suffer himself to dwell a moment on the image of the beautiful Countess. But he was not permitted to keep his wise resolve, of dismissing it altogether from his thoughts; for the bright original found occasions of repeating the impression, day after day.

She sometimes awaited him, with preparatory messages from the Empress. At other times, he surprised her and the young Princess at their studies. But at none of these meetings could she be prevailed on to linger a moment. When she had to deliver a message, she hastened away as soon as it was uttered. And, when he broke on her accidentally, the instant he had caught a glimpse of her white arms moving over the lute, or had heard the thrill of her exquisite voice warbling through the rooms, she would rise in disorder, and hurry from his ardent entreaties; but

in so sweet a confusion, that it was sure to fix her idea in his mind till their next rencounter.

Louis felt the truth of the observation, that, " The secret to interest, is to excite curiosity, and never to satisfy it." He was ever asking himself, why the charming Countess, the worshipped of so many hearts, should be so timid to him? Or rather, why she should thus fly, as if with aversion, one whose heart was so well prepared to admire the graces of a mind, which the Empress had assured him were equal to those of her matchless person. He had never seen any thing so beautiful as that person; and, in so fair a temple, he could not doubt, as fair a spirit must dwell. He longed to converse with it; to understand all its loveliness; and to feel his heart sympathise with it; as he was wont to do in holy Lindisfarne, with all the pure intelligence of woman's mind. It was not of love he thought; for, though he respected the sentiment, hitherto he had never felt its touch; and, as he had devoted his admiration to all that would take him out of himself, he had always regarded the winning of a female heart as but a secondary object in the aims of his life. " Ah! never," has he often said, " would I give my *noon of manhood to a myrtle shade!* Woman's love was given to be the helpmate of man; but his folly makes her the tyrant!" In this case, as in others, Louis was yet to learn — how wise is speculation, how absurd is practice!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Countess was indeed accomplished; and most accomplished in the art of charming. The noble, affectionate Cornelia, and the playful, tender Alice, knew nothing of her science; and of what spirit it was, the heart of their cousin had yet to prove.

On the day of his first appearance at the palace, she had

only to behold his singularly fine person, to think him the handsomest young man who had ever entered there. But the fair Altheim was not particularly attracted by the charms which most pleased in herself; and she would never have sought a second glance of the graceful secretary, had she not, accidentally, attended to a discourse between her Imperial mistress and the chancellor; wherein the latter, being piqued by a quotation from Ripperda, which the Empress made, to confute one of his political arguments,) rather sarcastically gave hints, that he suspected the wounded Jesuit had got something more illustrious in his diplomatic novice than he chose to acknowledge. Elizabeth affected to see nothing peculiarly distinguished in the manners of the secretary; but, when the chancellor had withdrawn, she let some ambiguous expressions escape her, in the triumph of having baffled his penetration. These intimations were not lost on the Countess. And, on the day following that in which she and the Archduchess had retreated from Louis in such haste, the Empress could not forbear telling her in what an amazement of admiration she had surprised him; adding, " He is a conquest worth *more* than a *smile!*"

Elizabeth smiled as she said this, but remarked no further. It was enough for her fair confidante; who, if her soul possessed any passion, did not scruple to own it was ambition. To gratify this, she had given her blooming beauties, at the age of seventeen, to the superanuated Count Altheim,—a man of high family and great riches, but who had long survived every faculty but that of dotage on any pretty face that would endure the incense of an habitual idolater of youth and beauty. At that early age, she had been sent for by the Empress; who loved her, from her having been the only daughter of the respectable woman, who had been her Majesty's nurse. In consequence of this circumstance, the pretty Otteline had been brought up as the favourite plaything of the Princess; but the gracious Elizabeth soon regarded her with a peculiar tenderness; and, on the death of the venerable mother, embraced the opportunity to have the companion of her youth brought to Vienna. Otteline de Blaggay was many years

younger than her Imperial mistress; and far transcended that beautiful princess in every personal grace. But the prejudice in favour of high birth being so great in Austria, that a mis-alliance is considered as indelible a disgrace as a moral dishonour; none of all the illustrious courtiers, who contemplated and sighed for the possession of the lovely Otteline, ever thought of making her the sharer of his rank. A thousand gay adventurers pressed forward to gratify their passion for beauty, and to excite an interest in their behalf with the Empress, by making her favourite their wife. But Otteline knew herself to be despised, though worshipped. And, as rank was all she wanted, to set her, in every respect, above the women who envied her charms, and therefore looked with double contempt on her untitled name, she resolved to marry for rank, and for nothing else. Within a few months after her arrival, the old Count Altheim became infatuated with her beauty; and, intoxicated by her smiles, dared every obloquy, to raise her to the station she seemed so calculated to adorn. The Empress felt the situation of her favourite; and having joyfully pronounced her consent, the no less delighted Otteline gave her hand to the Count in a splendid espousal, at which, not merely her patroness, but all the Imperial family were present.

While the fond husband lived, his young Countess was the brightest, the loveliest, the proudest of the court. Elizabeth exulted in the homage the haughty Austrians were obliged to pay her *élève* and countrywoman; and, to render it more complete, she determined that an application to the Countess should be the only avenue to her Imperial favours. But the Count died; and according to the law of Vienna, (that on the death of the husband, the wife loses the rank she acquired by marriage,) the Countess Altheim, though a richly endowed widow, found herself at once thrown back into all her former insignificance. This reverse was doubly galling, since she had been on the heights of consideration; and had trod that elevated path, with a step, not much less imperial than that of the Empress herself. To be contemned now, was mortification almost to madness. But the beautiful mourner had lived too long in

courts, to permit her rivals to perceive the complete victory which events had given them over her. Affecting a wish for retirement, after the death of so adoring a husband, she lived secluded for a time; loftily leaving that world, she was aware, would have scornfully excluded her: and, when the assumption of inconsolable grief was no longer feasible, Elizabeth appointed her to the high office of presiding governess over the Archduchess Maria-Theresa. This afforded her a dignified plea for still abstaining from the assemblies of the court; though, in private parties, she sometimes permitted herself to be seen. Yet this was a rare indulgence;—that the novelty of her unequalled charms, whenever she did appear, might continue to give her successive triumphs over the envy of her proud rivals;—and the effect was ever what she expected. She was then twenty-six; and, though in the meridian of her beauty, she foresaw that the time approached, when she must resign this, her sole sceptre of power, to some younger hand. What then should she be? She could not endure to dwell upon the answer; and again turned her views to some elevating alliance. To think of another Austrian connection would have been a hopeless speculation. She must direct her attention to some of the numerous noblemen from foreign countries who visited Vienna.

This plan was hardly determined on, before the arrival of the Marquis Santa Cruz gave the wished-for victim to her ambition, in the person of his son Don Ferdinand d'Osorio. Young, handsome, susceptible, and of high rank! it was an opportunity not to be neglected; and a few interviews with him at the *petit soupers* of the Baroness Hermanstadt put to flight every remembrance of the dove-eyed beauties he had so lately sighed for in the groves of Italy. Lost in the blaze of her attractions, he soon lived only in her presence, and drew from her a confession, that she awaited his father's consent alone to become his bride. But she was a Protestant, and she was of ignoble birth; two disqualifications, which the Marquis's bigotry of faith, and of ancestry, could not be brought to excuse. In anguish and hope, Ferdinand flew to the feet of his adored Otteline, and implored her to give him her hand, in spite

of his inexorable father. She knew the degrading consequence of such a compliance. She saw the point to which the passions of Ferdinand were hurrying his reason; and, by that phrensy of despair, to alarm the Marquis, and compel him to save the senses of his son, by consenting to the marriage, she exasperated the agonies of her lover's mind, by appearing to regard the proposal for a clandestine union as an insult from himself. When she allowed herself to be convinced of the contrary, still her affected indignation continued, though directed to a different object; and she declared, that her wounded honour could never be appeased, nor would she consent to see Don Ferdinand again, till he should bring her the Marquis's only *adequate apology* for the disgrace he had presumed to attach to her alliance.

Ferdinand departed from her, almost insane; and, in that condition, threw himself upon the mercy of his father. But the good Catholic, and Spanish Grandee, was not to be moved; and the frantic lover, being denied admittance at the door of his proud mistress, flew, to unburthen his distracted soul, to their mutual friend, the Baroness Hermanstadt.

The narrative that follows is of more common than agreeable detail. The Baroness was one of those women who are a blot on their own sex; and a blight to all of the other, on whom they fix their rapacious eyes. Abandoned to ostentatious expense, no means were rejected by which she could gratify the vanity her own fortune could not supply; and, while her friend looked abroad for an ennobling alliance to give her rank, she laid snares for dishonourable engagements, to furnish her with gold. Her iniquitous proceedings had, hitherto, been so warily managed between herself and her dupes, that no one else suspected her of error. She was generally received in the first circles of Vienna, and hence had a wider field from which to select her victims. The thoughtless expenditure of the son of Santa Cruz had for some time tempted her rapacity; now, the opportunity presented itself of making it all her own. She was an animated companion, and soon made the distracted Ferdinand forget the pretended disdain of managing

ambition, in the delusions of practised art and soothing flattery. Intoxicated with what he believed her generous oblivion of herself, in voluntarily sacrificing every duty to her newly avowed passion for him, he was only awakened from his trance of vice, by the information, that her husband, a rough Hungarian General, was returning from his post on the Turkish frontiers. She would gladly have exchanged this poor and rugged hero, for the soft prodigal she had bereft of his better reason; and she made the proposal to him: — To fly with him, before the Baron could arrive; and that henceforth their fate should be one. As she clung round him, making the insidious proffer, a gleam from his long-banished reason seemed to visit him from on high; he shrunk with horror from an everlasting engagement with such a woman. Though the slave of her allurements, she was not the mistress of his soul, and he dared to deny her. Then all her assumed persuasiveness was cast aside. She insisted on flight, with a vehemence, that turned her passionate love to threatening fury; and closed with holding a pistol to her head, to extort his assent, or to end her existence. He wrested the weapon from her hand; and, oppressed with his own bitter consciousness, left her in a storm of frantic upbraidings.

From this disgraceful connection it was, that the Marquis Santa Cruz had borne away his son.

Meanwhile, the disappointed Countess Altheim, foiled by her perfidious friend, and versatile lover, broke with the one, and really disdained the other. And, though she never condescended to enquire about either, after the double desertion was known to her beyond a doubt; yet she was not insensible to some feeling of gratified revenge, when she heard that Ferdinand had abandoned her rival, and left the country.

The Marquis hastened, with his remorseful son, to Holland and to England. But the pangs of repentance had not struck at the root of his crime. He mourned the act of guilt; not the impassioned nature which impelled it. He cursed the hour in which he met the Baroness Hermanstadt; but he did not condemn the headlong impetuosity, with which he yielded to every impulse of self-

gratification. The only son of his parents, and heir to immense revenues in both hemispheres, he had been indulged in every wish, till, he believed, he had no duty in life but to enjoy its pleasures. It is true, that in calm perspective he only spoke of those which are blameless: but when personal gratification is the principle of existence, the boundary between innocence and transgression is often invisible. Ferdinand had, more than once, trembled on its verge. He had now overleaped it. And though racked with self-abhorrence, and hoping, by deeds of penance, to repass it, yet he fostered the passions which had betrayed him: and, even found a new temptation for their excesses, in the land of his penitential pilgrimage. By a strange coincidence of fate, while he was sowing tares in the happy fields of Lindisfarne, Countess Altheim was preparing a similar attempt on the peace of its darling Louis.

The beautiful Otteline was as widely different from the character of her false friend, as unsunned snow from the molten lava of Vesuvius. She sought for nothing in her union with Ferdinand, but the rank he would bestow. His riches, and his love, were alike indifferent to her; and when she turned her eyes on the handsome secretary of Ignatius, she had no other idea in her meditated attack, but what aimed at sharing a birthright, which, the Empress had assured her, would exceed her proudest wishes. Notwithstanding her incapability of loving; and, indeed, of feeling any emotion but those connected with her ambition, and its disappointments; she was so keen an observer, and so fine an actress, that he must have had an *Ithuriel* eye, who could have distinguished the counterfeit from the real, in her pretensions.

Having made her first advances on Louis, by a retreating manœuvre, she perceived that her personal charms had made their intended impression; and that she had only to produce the graces of her conversation, to complete the conquest. On subjects of general taste she was mistress; and in every department of human knowledge, that belongs to worldly wisdom, she was perfectly informed. If sympathy did not give her anticipation of her lover's thoughts, self-interest endowed her with tact to glide into his opin-

ions; and she did this so adroitly, as to make her echo appear the leading voice. Her accomplishments were likewise brought into play; and the Empress did not disdain to partake the management. Once or twice she detained the Archduchess and her governess in the room, to call forth some natural or acquired charm in the beautiful instructress; and when the blushing Countess withdrew, her Majesty usually made some observation on the inimitable perfections of her character, and the engaging modesty by which they were so constantly veiled.

In one of these interviews, when Louis was gazing with his soul in his eyes after the departing steps of the too exquisite Otteline, the Empress, with a peculiar smile, ejaculated,—"She has lately become enamoured of politics, and, should she negotiate for herself, adieu my right in her possession!"

Louis felt himself turn pale, but he did not reply. Though his Imperial inquisitor thought his looks were sufficiently expressive, she was determined to carry away a direct avowal; and, with a little archness, she added, "But you, perhaps, doubt her powers?"

He coloured as he replied,—"I believe the Countess Altheim may command just what she pleases."

"Indeed!" cried the Empress; "then you must not be my minister. If she negotiate against me, I see where my interest would be."

Elizabeth smiled again; and with an expression that Louis could not resolve into any positive meaning;—but it was unpleasant to him, and gave him an impression of being played upon. A confused recollection of the Sieur's exordium against the power of beauty suddenly occurred to him; and, with rather a more offended air than is often ventured to an Empress, he said,—"Believing that the Countess Altheim would always please to command what is right, I did not suppose her influence could ever be actuated against the interests of your Majesty."

The soft colour on Elizabeth's cheek mounted to a proud crimson. The words were compliment, but the manner reproof. She regarded the audacious speaker with a look of astonishment. His eyes were now directed to the ground.

She felt she had been reproved; and by a youth! a boy! The son of a man who, if her confidant and coadjutor, she was also his! and, from circumstances, so much more in her power, than she in his, that at any moment she could ground his chariot in the quicksands, and give him a fall as deep as that which had sunk for ever the fortunes of his predecessor, the great Alberoni! And yet the son of this man — so perilously placed, so dependent on her will — durst presume to be offended with an innocent freedom she had condescended to take with his feelings! He had dared to imply to her, that she had trifled with him beneath her dignity! and still he stood before her, with a mien of more true respect, than any she was accustomed to meet from the most obsequious of her vassals!

With a haughty swelling at her heart, the Imperial Elizabeth ran through the first of these suggestions; but, as she contemplated the countenance of the speaker, so noble, so modest, she found a more ingenuous sentiment arise. She had then, for the first time in her life, beheld the unveiled face of simple truth! The situation was strange to her; but there was a charm even in the novelty: and again smiling, but with an air in which all the distance of her rank was conveyed, she graciously said, "There was something, besides compliment, in that speech of yours, De Montemar; but I forgive you." She stretched out her hand to him, in sign of full pardon; and, as he respectfully touched it with his lip, she added, "You would make a better counsellor than a courtier; but if you mean to be a statesman, you must unite both."

He bowed, as she turned away; and said to himself, "Then I must mean to be, what I never can be. If the world is not to be governed without the moral degradation of its governors, my ambition to be a ruler must follow Orlando's wits to the moon!"

Gracious as the Empress looked and spoke, he yet saw that he had been on the verge of giving her mortal offence. His Pastor uncle had often told him the atmosphere of courts was cold, in proportion to their elevation: it was as withering to every honest demonstration of the heart, as the icy peaks of the glaciers to the verdure which would flourish in

the valley! Louis did not, then, quite believe the representation; but he now remembered the lesson, and sighed to find it true.

Musing on the causes and consequences of so unnatural a state of moral existence, he passed hastily through the galleries. The day was unusually warm for the season, and the heat of the stoves made the unventilated air so oppressive, that, absorbed in thought, he unconsciously complied with his bodily feeling; and, with his cap still in his hand, he allowed his pelisse to fall open from his figure, as he hastened down the passages. As he turned into an obscure lobby, by which he avoided the public guard-room, he passed the bottom of a flight of steps. Two persons were coming out of a door, at their summit. He did not observe the circumstance, so profound was his reverie, till he heard the voice of Wharton, exclaiming, "'Tis he, by Heaven!"

Louis sprang forward; but not to meet him. He disappeared from the passage, at the very instant he heard the Duke throw himself over the rails of the stair, and call in louder accents, "De Montemar! De Montemar! Stop, for God's sake! It is Wharton who calls you!"

But Louis continued to fly, and Wharton to pursue, till the former, abruptly turning through a small postern into the street, darted into his carriage, which always awaited him at this obscure entrance. It was just wheeling into the mob of attending equipages, when he beheld the Duke issue from the gate, and stand, gazing around in search of his faithless friend!

"Faithless I am not, dear, insulted Wharton!" cried Louis, aloud, though unheard by him he apostrophised. "But you have seen me desert you! Fly you, in spite of the sacred adjuration with which you would have recalled me! Oh, what do you now think of ungrateful De Montemar?"

At that moment he saw the Duke strike his forehead as in the vexation of disappointment; and in the next the turn of the carriage snatched him from his sight.

Louis now began to arraign his own carelessness, in having erred so against warning, as to permit any abstraction of mind to divert him from the indispensable concealment

of his person. Angry with himself, and vexed to the soul, that his negligent reverie had so immediately incurred the evil most deprecated by Ignatius, the wormwood in his heart, for a moment, distilled over every other object, and, with a bitterness unusual to him, he exclaimed, "Why did I forget that a man, sworn to politics, has immolated body and mind? Neither love, nor friendship, nor the reasoning faculty, are for him. He has made to himself a deity, who must command all his thoughts! Had I properly recollected this detested creed, coiled like Satan in his serpent-train, I might have passed through the dust unnoticed by the erect eyes of Duke Wharton!"

Perhaps the consciousness that his own nature had caught some of this abhorrent system of disguise, excited temper, as well as regret, in this moody exclamation! His soul was naturally brave and frank; but the mysterious language of the Sieur had touched him with a kind of superstitious dread, on certain points; and he now shrunk from mentioning this rencontre to any one. He knew it would fill Ignatius with alarm for their secret; and, in the present state of his slowly closing wounds, all agitation was dangerous. To name it to the Empress, might not only reawaken her suspicions of the Duke, but excite her to precautions hostile to his safety. Louis thought, and rethought, over these circumstances; and, as his perturbed feelings subsided, and gave him clearer judgment, he fully determined on silence. He flattered himself that no ill could proceed from this concealment; and, while he resolved to be more circumspect in future, he believed that Wharton was incapable of any act which could implicate his friend, or his own inherent nobleness. He did not hope that the Duke could suppose, that either now, or on the Danube, he had mistaken any other person for his companion Montemar! Wharton might have been persuaded to say the mistake was probable; but that companion could not believe the possibility of his having ever thought so. For could any one make Louis think he had not seen Wharton on the Danube; that he had not heard his voice calling on him through the passages of the palace?

"Oh, no," cried he; "there is an identity which cannot

deceive the heart! You know that it was Louis de Montemar you saw; that it was Louis de Montemar who fled you! But a day will come, I trust, when you may know all; or at least grant to me, that one essential in true friendship is sometimes to confide even against the evidence of our senses."

With that romantic faith, Louis had confided in the purity of Wharton's attachment; and he believed that Wharton would not be less generous to him. But Louis was enthusiastic; and judged men with that deference to oral wisdom, which hangs on the precept of virtue, as if it were virtue's self. He was yet practically ignorant, that a man's taste for moral excellence might be as exquisite as that which modelled the life of Addison; and his conduct be as foreign from his theory, as that which debased the genius of Richard Savage. Hence, Louis formed his opinion of his fellow-creatures, rather from the sentiments he heard them utter, than from the actions he was told they performed. He could not be mistaken in the one; misrepresentation, or misapprehension of motives, might pervert the other; and thus, he more often made a good sentiment the commentary on a dubious action, than tried the principles of the sentimentalist by the rectitude of his conduct. Indeed, he was not thus liberal merely from never having supposed the absurdity of men admiring a principle they are determined never to adopt; but from an ingenuous pleader in his own breast, whose still small voice continually whispered to him, "Why should I conceive the worst of others, when my own conduct so often falls short of my best intentions! nay, frequently turns so blindly aside, that I wonder to find myself in the midst of errors, when I most intended to do the perfect right! But the heart's weakness, the impatience of the will, the forwardness of the temper! how can I feel these within me, and not judge with charity of appearances in others?"

"And you, dear Wharton," cried he, "are now called on to judge me charitably; to believe any thing of me, but that I could treat you thus from the dictates of my own will."

How Wharton did judge of the conduct of Louis de Mon-

temar, after events were to prove. The latter was right in believing the Duke sure of his friend's identity, both on the Danube and in the palace gallery. But in the first instance, as Wharton supposed, on seeing him no more, that some cause must have hurried him from Vienna, his Grace did not think it worth his while to press the matter on those who denied it. But now that he had not only seen him again, but seen him fly his sight and his voice! Here, indeed, Wharton could hardly credit his senses. And he was still standing in the porch, gazing after the various passing carriages, when the gentleman he had broken from in his pursuit rejoined him.

He enquired of the Duke who the person could be he was so eager to overtake; and, remarking on the oddity of so determined an avoidance, exclaimed, "He must have been gone in an instant; for, though I heard your exclamation, I never saw to whom it was made."

"Then, I have probably been racing after a ghost," replied Wharton, stifling his chagrin under a gay laugh; "but if it have aught of mother-earth about its airy sides, I will grapple with it yet."

His companion replied in the same strain, observing, that had it not been for the over-topping figure of the Duke, he might have had a glimpse of the nimble-footed apparition. But, soon observing that the curved brow of Wharton did not agree with the merriment on his lip, the gentleman looked more serious, and again asked the name of the fugitive. Perceiving that his present associate had not attended to the words of his exclamation, whatever he had done to its sound, the Duke carelessly answered, "It matters not; he is only a scape-goat, with more sins on his skittish head than the fool thinks of!"

"But his flight vexes you."

"Because he is so good as to bear away my sins on his pate, and I am not in a humour to be tired of their company."

"He is your confessor, then, and was flying from his duty."

"You have it," returned the Duke, in a low whisper;

" and, for my conscience' sake, without further comment, let us allow him to go to the devil!"

The gentleman shook his head incredulously; but added, laughing, " I am too good a Catholic to pry into mysteries." And Wharton, seeing he suspected some affair of gallantry, with a glance to corroborate the idea, laughed also, and passed to another subject.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHETHER Duke Wharton disdained to mention again the name of the friend who had unquestionably fled him, or how it happened that no notice transpired of this second rencontre, Louis could not determine; but as several days passed without his receiving any intimation of it at the palace, he hoped it was buried in the mind of the Duke; and that, only between themselves, it would hereafter be remembered.

The Sieur was still a prisoner in his cell. The more eager he became to resume his diplomatic duties, the more his recovery was retarded. Twice in the course of a fortnight the anxiety of his mind had inflamed his wounds to jeopardy. Louis said every thing that cheering anticipations could devise, to assuage this impatience. But his own perseverance in his double, nay treble duty, at the college, the palace, and the château, did most to satisfy the Sieur, by proving that he had not employed an inefficient agent.

Couriers arrived, and were despatched with propositions and acquiescences, which every time brought the grand object nearer to a close; and Louis's increasing labours were rewarded every day by the sunny smiles of the bewitching Otteline. The Empress seemed to have forgotten what had passed between herself and the young secretary, respecting her; and the favourite herself, as if unconscious

of having been referred to, continued to him those ineffable attentions of eye and ear, which, without a word, are the most eloquent language of the soul. He saw her beautiful, had witnessed her accomplished; from the Empress he heard of her exalted virtues; and, under such impressions, he hourly felt the magnetic influence of her presence.

He had conceived a high idea of the female character, from the two sweet companions of his youth; and, loving them with a brother's pride, whenever the image of a more exclusive attachment would obtrude itself, their graces of person and of mind generally formed the perfect vision. Amongst the fair daughters of Northumberland, who added to the winter festivities of Morewick Hall, no such miracle of a romantic brain had ever presented itself. Many of them were beauteous, amiable, and engaging; but all were inferior, in his estimation, to the intellectual Cornelia, or the touching Alice: and when those charming sisters continued to rally him on his invulnerable heart, he would plead guilty to the charge, declaring it was all divided between fraternal love for them, and, he trusted, some future friendship with a brother mind of his own sex.

The month he passed in the Highlands of Scotland gave him, he believed, this treasure, in the accomplished Wharton. The Duke courted his confidence. And from one so full of every elevated sentiment, of every enchanting gaiety, of every demonstration of regard, could he withhold it? No; he loved him; — as he was, afterwards, too well inclined to adore the resistless Otteline; —with all his imagination, all the ardour of restrainless enthusiasm!

His *beau idéal* of the female form was far surpassed by what he saw in his first interview with the Countess Altheim; and the image of perfect beauty being once impressed on his senses, it was easy to stamp belief on every show of its intellectual loveliness. At first he regarded her faultless lineaments with little more than the same delighted taste with which he used to gaze on the admirable forms from Italy, which embellished the galleries of Bamborough. But when those eyes, so beautiful in themselves, were turned on him with a glance that conveyed her soul

to his, then the ethereal fire seemed to have shot from heaven on the fair statue, and he felt its electricity in every vein.

One morning, after the Empress had retired from the saloon, Louis remained, by her orders, to make minutes of the discussion. The Countess Altheim sat near him, awaiting the memorandum she was to convey to her mistress. He pursued his task with a diligence, neither his employer nor her favourite desired; but he began to tremble on meeting the eyes which now so kindly beamed on him; and inexplicable as were the feelings with which he enjoyed and dreaded their appeals to his sensibility, he shrunk with alarm at the most distant whisper of his heart that *now he loved!*

While he still sat busily writing, with his eyes riveted to the paper, and the fair Otteline's on him with a look that was almost indignant at his perverse industry, the door opened, and a lady in deep mourning, and half-fainting, was assisted into the room by an attendant of the same sex. The Countess was transfixed to her seat. But at sight of a woman in such a state, Louis forgot the *Imperial boudoir*, and the secrecy of his visits there, and hastened to her assistance. The Countess recovered her presence of mind in the same instant, and approached the invalid; but she had glanced her eyes on Louis as he drew near, and had already accepted his supporting arm. Between him and the other lady she was conducted to a sofa. In a voice of profound respect, but with evident vexation, the Countess enquired how her Imperial Highness had been affected? and how those apartments were so fortunate as to be honoured by her presence? The attendant lady answered for her mistress, (who still leaned her head on the shoulder of Louis,) that she was returning from a visit to the Archduchess Maria Theresa; when, becoming suddenly faint, she turned into the Altheim gallery in hopes of meeting the Countess, and obtaining some *eau de Cologne.*

The anticipated restorative was immediately produced; and the Princess, having taken some, soon after re-opened her eyes, and relinquished her hold on her respectful supporter. Her lady attendant, and the Countess, vied with

each other in felicitations on her recovery; and, while the latter was pressing the use of several pungent essences, Louis, who hoped his assistance had passed unnoticed, was gliding out of the room: but the still languid invalid caught a glimpse of his retreating figure; and abruptly interrupting the Countess, requested her to call her friend back, as she wished to thank him for his services.

Otteline obeyed; though he saw by her altered countenance it was with reluctance; however he turned to the soft summons of her voice, and approached the sofa with a modest bow. The Princess directed her large dark eyes upon the figure and face of Louis; both of which surprised her, as they were strange to the court; and yet possessed *un air distingué*, too pre-eminent, she was sure, to belong to any man attending there in a dependent quality.

"Sir," said she, "your politeness has been very useful to me; and I desire to know to whom I am obliged."

He bowed, but it was in confusion. He felt that his tongue would blister in uttering the first falsehood he had ever even implied in his life. Supposing that this disordered silence arose from a flattering awe of herself, her Highness turned with a smile to the Countess, and demanded of her the name of her friend.

"The Chevalier de Phaffenberg," replied the favourite, with a rising colour.

"Phaffenberg!" repeated the Princess; "I thought that noble family was extinct. Of which of the brothers, Ernest, or Rudolph, is the son?"

Her eyes addressed the question to Louis; but his confusion increased, and he did not look up to meet them. He even made a step towards the door; so incapable was he of supporting the representation of the Countess by any direct deception from his own lips. She did not observe his changing complexion in vain; and bending to the illustrious questioner, whispered something in her ear. Her Highness more than smiled as she listened; she laughed and nodded her head, in sign that she understood her; then turning to Louis again addressed him.

"Chevalier, I will not detain you longer. Your politeness would honour the best blood in Germany; and I

shall be happy in having an opportunity of proving that I think so. You know where to find me; and may, any day, call upon my best power to do you service."

Grateful for being released from further enquiries, Louis bowed again, respectfully, to the Princess, but still in silence, and hastened from the apartment.

On his return to the Sieur, he refrained from chafing his present anxious state, by setting him on the rack, to guess who this lady might be, who had so unluckily surprised his secretary in the Empress's *boudoir;* and whether the accident would be productive of vexations to their proceedings, or die away, a mere indifferent circumstance. On the illustrious invalid herself, Louis would not have cast a second thought, after he had rendered the assistance due to her sex, and her indisposition: but his gratitude towards the prompt attention, or rather intuitive knowledge of his feelings, evinced by the Countess, kept the whole scene in his mind during the night; and filled him with impatience for the morning, when he might, silently at least, intimate to her some perception of the gratefulness which possessed him.

He went earlier than usual to the palace, on the succeeding day, both to make his apology to the Empress for having left her memorandum unfinished, and in hopes of having a few minutes, in which to imply to the amiable favourite, the sentiment with which her goodness had inspired him. But it could only be implied generally; to particularise the obligation, would be to betray that he was other than the Chevalier Phaffenberg: then why did he wish to find her alone? He had no distinct apprehension, why this hope speeded him forward; only, he certainly felt a warmth in his bosom, while meditating on the past scene, more congenial to his nature, than all the raptures her various graces had before awakened. The promptitude with which she gave his supposed name, and the delicacy with which she had perceived his repugnance to answer the Princess, appeared to him a testimony of quick interest in his feelings; a reading of his mind; a sympathy with its thoughts; that demanded his utmost gratitude, but it had obtained something more. He sighed as he approached

the palace, and said to himself, "Such kindness speaks to me of home; of dear, distant Lindisfarne,

> "Where heart met heart, reciprocally soft,
> Each other's pillow, to repose divine!"

As he wished, he found. The lovely Otteline was alone; but in a mood of unusual pensiveness. She was leaning her head upon her arm, when he entered; and there was a flush about her beautiful eyes, as if she had been weeping. She started on seeing him; and rising hastily, as if to disguise the chagrin which hung on her brow, said two or three gay words of welcome.

The discordant expressions in her face did not escape the watchful eye of growing passion. He ventured to utter a fear, that she was not well; or that something had happened to disturb her tranquillity.

"Nothing," replied she.

He looked incredulous; and she added with a smile, checked by a sigh, "Chevalier, if you would preserve your quiet, never enquire into the caprices of a woman."

"Then, it is the caprice of some woman, which now disturbs yours?" exclaimed he: "Is it possible the Empress can have given pain to one she so entirely loves?"

"Not the Empress," replied the Countess eagerly, as if in haste to exonerate her benefactress; "she is all graciousness. But the Electress of Bavaria! — she you so unfortunately assisted yesterday in this room; it is from her that I have met with insult."

"Insult!" re-echoed Louis; "impossible to you!"

"I wish it were so," replied the Countess; "but many causes make me an object of envy to that malicious Princess; and now she has triumphed."

"Again, I must say, impossible!" cried he; "for how can she, or any woman, triumph over the Countess Altheim? Your virtues ——"

"They are my own," interrupted she, casting down her eyes; "but my reputation is not; and yesterday put that into her power."

Some apprehension of what the Countess would not add, gleamed upon her auditor.

"How?—No, no!" cried he.

She looked up in graceful disorder, and evidently assuming vivacity, "Chevalier," returned she, "you are alarmed! But, indeed, it is without reason. Believe it my caprice, if you like; and let us dismiss the subject! It is doubling vexation to impart it."

This generous sentiment excited him the more to persevere in knowing the cause of her ill-disguised distress; and with increased earnestness, he conjured her, only to satisfy him on what she meant by saying, that yesterday had put her reputation in the power of the Electress of Bavaria?

With mingled seriousness and badinage, the Countess attempted to put him from his question; but it was done in a way rather to stimulate than to allay his suspicion, that he was concerned in her vexation; and, therefore, he thought himself bound in honour, as he was impelled by his heart, to press an explanation.

"I was a weak creature," returned she, "to drop any thing of all this folly to you; for, indeed, you will think it nonsense when you hear it!—Only, a woman's delicacy is so very sensitive."

"Try me," replied Louis, forcing an answering smile.

"Then, be the consequence on your own obstinate head!" said she, with a glance of tender archness; but immediately casting down her eyes, as if she feared they had told too much; in the same gay tone she continued.

"On my mentioning to my Imperial mistress the *mal-à-propos* indisposition of the Electress of Bavaria, her Majesty commanded me to go the same night, and make the Electress a visit of enquiries. I found her Highness without trace of illness, in her customary violent spirits, and eager to seize on any new subject for mirth. I had hardly delivered my message, before she began to rally me on your account; and asked so many questions respecting the object of your presence in my apartments, and, indeed, about your family and views in life, that I absolutely was lost in confusion."

The Countess paused for Louis's reply: but he was incapable of making one; and only answered her kindled

cheeks, with a crimson deeper than her own. She had glanced on his countenance, and in softer accents resumed.

"I might have extricated myself from the volatile Electress, had not my embarrassment been instantly observed by that mischievous Duke Wharton, who stood by laughing all the time, and prompting his only too well-inclined mistress."

A new apprehension shot into the mind of Louis; and, instinctively keeping his eyes directed to the floor, he said, with a half smile, "And what did Duke Wharton prompt?"

Had Louis ventured one glance upward, he would have seen the eyes of the Countess riveted upon his face, with a steady investigation of what it might betray; while the managed tones of her voice spoke only the accents of half discovered tenderness; or, more often, the apparent assumption of a gay contempt of the raillery she described.

"He was alone with the Electress, when I was announced, replied she, "and that gave her Highness a hint to begin my persecution, by affecting to whisper him, that my intrusion would tell no tales, as she had surprised me that very morning *tête-à-tête* with —— I will not repeat the silly names of gallantry she called you; but they excited the curiosity of the Duke: and then she described your person as accurately as if she had been a sculptor. While her Highness proceeded in these details, I thought Wharton had lost his wits; and when she summed up her account, with naming you as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, he fell into a convulsion of laughter, that amazed her, as well as myself.

"Then began such cross questionings, and remarks; such banter from the Duke; such broad surmise from the Electress; that, as I would not betray the secret of my Imperial mistress, by acknowledging your visits are to her; (for visits, Duke Wharton has discovered them to be!) I was obliged to assent to her Highness's jeering insinuations on another quarter.

"At first I combated her charge," added the Countess, perceiving something in the countenance of Louis, that partook more of rising displeasure than of gratified emotion; "I attempted to speak of your presence having been merely

accidental; but Duke Wharton, with a sly slaugh, exclaimed, *I am a stargazer, Lady; and know that fate, not chance, guides this son of Latona, by noon-tide and moon-tide; and any other tide that you please, to a certain palace! — What his errand is, I am too discreet to whisper.*"

Convinced that Wharton had, indeed, recognised him in the Electress's description; and indignant that the friend, from whom he expected nothing but generosity, should thus play with a situation he must see was meant to be concealed; Louis replied with resentful scorn, "But you treated such light impertinence with the disdain it merited?"

"I tried to do so," returned she, seeming to relapse into painful seriousness; "but the raillery of the Duke, and the knowledge he showed of your movements, alarmed me for the secret of the Empress: and then, — the cruel alternative! the Electress casting all those visits to my account, with insinuations —— I cannot speak them."

Her eye had caught the flashing light of her auditor, and abruptly stopping, she rose from her chair. He stood motionless with indignation. At last, forcing words from his quivering lip, he exclaimed, "Madam, I conjure you! tell me how the Electress — how Duke Wharton could dare to couple your reputation, and my presence, with slander; and — I will find a way to disprove it."

"Oh, no," returned she, "you must not disprove, what duty to my Imperial mistress would not allow me to deny."

Louis did not believe he had heard distinctly; he told her so. But she repeated what she had said; assuring him, with increased agitation, that where she so entirely loved, as she did the Empress, her life was the least sacrifice she would make to preserve her interests. He gazed on her with doubtful admiration.

"But to be silent, at an aspersion on your fair name! that, madam," cried he, "can never be a duty in your sex. A man may redeem himself from obloquy; a woman never can! and if I am implicated in sullying your honour, I repeat again, I will disprove the slander at the peril of my life."

"That can only be done between man and man," said the Countess in a collected voice; though inwardly alarmed

for the consequence of a duel between her lover and the Duke. "And here the provocation came from the opposite sex. Duke Wharton merely amused himself with my confusion, after the Electress had presumed to make her charge. But, were it otherwise, a violent assertion of my honour is beyond your power. Your life, Chevalier," added she, turning her eyes on his face, "is your own to give! but, not the safety of the Sieur Ignatius, not the honour of the Baron de Ripperda; not the future happiness, public and private, of the Empress Elizabeth! These, and the other momentous interests, you are so well aware of, all depend upon keeping secret from the Electress of Bavaria and her counsellors, the purport of your visits to these apartments. You could be admitted, but for one of two reasons: to me, or to the Empress. And, when hardly pressed by her Highness last night, to avoid the treason of betraying my mistress, I was obliged——" she turned away her blushing face as she added, "not merely, not to deny, but to sanction the suspicion, — which caused the tears in which you surprised me."

Louis stood paralysed at this last disclosure. But, when he saw that tears flowed afresh from her eyes, and streamed down her flushed cheeks, as she moved from him to leave the room, he flew towards her, and catching her by the gown, implored her, in an agitated voice, to stop and hear him. She turned on him with a look of gentle reproach,— of dissolving tenderness, that bereft him at once of all consideration; and what he said, what he avowed, he knew not, till he found her hand clasped to his lips, and heard her say — "After this, I need not blush to turn my eyes on the only way that can now redeem my name!" She spoke with an enchanting smile, and added, "It will disprove our adversary's slanderous accusation, without betraying her rival's cause, or risking a life, perhaps too precious to me!"

Before he could reply, she heard the steps of Elizabeth in the adjoining chamber; and, sliding her hand from his impassioned grasp, disappeared through the conservatory. He was in so much agitation when the Empress entered, that she perceived it; and, guessing the cause, did not

notice it; but, wishing her favourite full success in this her own peculiar affair, she dismissed that of politics in a very few words; and graciously received Louis's excuse for the unfinished minutes of the day before.

As he proceeded to the château, where he was to complete some transcripts, before he returned to the College, he tried to think on what had passed; but all within him was in tumult. The hours of his labour, and of his meditation, were the same; he could not tranquillise the strange whirlwind of emotions which raged in his mind. He recalled again and again, before the tribunal of his judgment, the particulars of the scene which had just passed; but they appeared in such broken apparitions, that he could reduce nothing to certainty, nothing on which he could lay his hand and say, "It is so."

At one moment indignation fired him against the part Duke Wharton had taken in it; and, in the next, he arraigned the wayward fate, which had compelled him to merit all the Duke's resentment, by his own apparently insulting conduct in the palace gallery. Then his imagination, all in a blaze, ran over the celestial charms of the exquisite creature, whose unreceding hand he had pressed to his lips — to his heart! He felt her eye-beams, still agitating its inmost recesses; but he did not feel that heart quite consent to his often repeated exclamation — "She loves me — and I am happy!" He did not feel that instant union of spirits, that ineffable communion of heart with heart, and soul with soul, which he had ever believed the pledge of mutual love; that mystery of the soul, which, even on earth, asserts its immortal nature! The beautiful Otteline was still a beautiful surface to him; an idol to be adored. But he found not that sense of perfect sympathy shooting from her dear presence, through all his being, which would make him cry aloud, "I love her, and her alone!"

Dissatisfied with himself for this fastidiousness, when he ought to have been all transport, he turned to the hour of meeting the Sieur, with the feelings of a man in a dream, from which he was doubtful that he would not be glad to awake.

CHAPTER XIX.

When Louis entered the cloister, which led to the Sieur's apartment, he met Martini hurrying towards him.

"Well arrived, Signor!" cried he; "I was coming to the château in quest of you. There is a noble bustle in my master's chamber."

"By your countenance, no ill news?" said Louis; though not unapprehensive that some mischievous consequence had transpired from his unfortunate surprisal in the Altheim apartments.

"Not that I know of," cried Martini; "but a little motion more than ordinary, always make me merry. I love stirring, gloriously! And my master and a *booted-and-spurred* have been at high words these two hours."

With nothing so much in his mind, as some anticipated exposure from the malice of the Electress, Louis proceeded to the chamber with a more eager step than inclination. He found the Sieur on his couch, with the table before him, spread with opened packets; and a person standing beside him in the dress of a courier. At some distance stood two other travellers. The courier was talking in Italian with great earnestness. Ignatius listened with his usual lofty attention: but, when his vigilant eye caught the figure of Louis advancing from behind a dark curtain which divided the apartments, he put up his hand with an air of authority to the speaker, who instantly became silent.

"Louis," said the Sieur, addressing his pupil in German, "here is news from Madrid, to raise me from the tomb; had the poniards of my enemies been keen enough to have laid me there! France, whose bonds were so ruinously dear to the heart of the King of Spain, has cut the cord herself; and by a stroke of insult, for which even his partiality cannot find an excuse."

Louis's heart was lightened of the apprehensions with which he had entered; and, with glad congratulations,

reflected the unusual animation which shone in the eyes of Ignatius. The Sieur then ordered the courier to retire till he could see him again. The other two travellers also obeyed the motion of his hand; and, in Spanish, he directed them likewise to put themselves under the care of Martini.

The room being left to the statesman and his secretary, the Sieur, with a less reserved air, beckoned Louis to approach him; and, when they were seated, the former opened a circumstantial detail of what had occasioned this abrupt rupture between the courts of Versailles and Saint Ildefonso.

During the late regency of the Duke of Orleans, a treaty of marriage had been entered into between the young King of France, Louis XV., and Philip's daughter, the Infanta Maria-Anna, then a mere child. According to the custom of the times, she was sent to Paris to receive an education befitting the future bride of a French monarch; and at a certain age she was to be solemnly affianced. On the death of the Duke of Orleans, and the promotion of the Duke of Bourbon to the functions of prime minister, the cabinet of France seemed to change its measures with regard to Spain; at least, encroachments were made, which aroused the suspicions of Philip's Queen; and she tried to awaken the jealousy of her husband against the new minister. Attached to the house from whence he sprung, and inclined to put the best construction on all its actions, it was no easy task to make the royal grandson of Louis the Fourteenth comprehend that the Duke of Bourbon never considered the interest of Spain in his policy. Some transactions, more than dubious in their principle and tendency, at last made King Philip allow a possibility that he might confide too implicitly in his French relations; and, after much argument from the Baron Ripperda, and more entreaty from his Queen, he was at length persuaded to counterpoise the self-aggrandising spirit they had detected, by commencing a secret negotiation with Austria. Still, however, habitual partiality to his native country hung about the heart of Philip, and caused great uneasiness in

the minds of the Queen and the Baron, under whose auspices the mysterious embassy set forth. As the negotiation rapidly proceeded, the King often dropped hints on the consequences of precipitancy; and frequently filled them with alarm, lest he should at last refuse his royal sanction to the completion of their labours, and so involve themselves and their cause in utter infamy.

The Duke of Bourbon was indeed actuated by different principles, both political and personal, from those which had impelled the Duke of Orleans to propose new bonds of alliance between the royal families of France and Spain. He disliked the Spanish marriage altogether; besides, so many years must elapse before the Infanta could be of age for the espousals, and the health of the anticipated bridegroom was so precarious, it seemed no improbability that his death, in the mean while, might transfer the royal succession to the house of Orleans. This was an aggrandisement of that ambitious family, which the no less ambitious Duke of Bourbon could not contemplate with patience; and, at this juncture, Duke Wharton appeared at his elbow, as if conjured there on purpose to set the two great heads of the house of Bourbon at lasting enmity. He suspected that something clandestine was going on between the courts of Spain and Austria; and having substantiated his suspicions, he left Vienna for Paris a few days after his rencontre with Louis de Montemar on the Danube. He revealed to the Duke of Bourbon all that he had discovered; and urged him to save his branch of the royal stock from being overtopped by that of Orleans, or of Spain, by immediately adopting an entire new policy from that of his predecessor. As a first movement, he proposed a marriage for the young King with some princess of maturer years than the Spanish Infanta. Bourbon readily embraced this suggestion, which had been some time floating in his own mind. And, on the two Dukes consulting who this princess should be, (each having his own particular reasons,) their choice fell on Maria, the daughter of Stanislaus Letzinsky, the ex-King of Poland. Wharton undertook to prepare his youthful Majesty to accept the alternative;

and, in the interview, he found that the docile King of France was easily prevailed on to exchange a bride, still in the school-room, for a blooming young woman, full of accomplishments and charms.

The views of Wharton, in this manœuvre, were still directed to his favourite project of reinstating the Stuarts. At present, France, and Spain, and Austria, were all equally estranged from their cause. By creating a rupture between the two former powers, he divided their interests; implicated their allies; and, necessarily, threw France again into the scale of the Stuart and Bavarian claims. Philip had declared himself for George of Brunswick, and was on the point of signing the pragmatic sanction; this Wharton knew: and, by mixing the adversaries of the latter succession with the political rivals of England, he returned to Vienna with a promised accession to his party, that made him omnipotent in the Bavarian councils.

To prevent any opposition to the proposed royal nuptials from the remonstrances of Spain, as soon as the Duke of Wharton had left Paris (which he did with the negligent air of a mere visiter to the widowed Queen at St. Germain's), the Duke of Bourbon pursued the advantage that nobleman had gained for him, and persuaded the King to send the Infanta back to Madrid, without any previous notice to her parents. She was accompanied by a lady of honour, and an ecclesiastic of high dignity, to be her protectors on the way, and to deliver a suitable apology on the urgency of the case to the King and Queen of Spain. When the Abbot and his young charge were so unexpectedly announced to the presence of the royal pair, the good priest was too much agitated to fulfil his instructions with the diplomatic dignity he was enjoined: he fell at once on his knees, and declared his errand in confusion and anguish of spirit. The astonishment and grief of Philip showed itself in silence and tears; but the mortification of his Queen burst into rage and invective. When the Abbot offered the letters of explanation, she dashed them out of his hand; and tearing the picture of Louis the Fifteenth from her bracelet, trampled it under her feet. All now was uproar. The French ambassador and every French consul

were ordered to depart the Spanish territories without delay; and when Philip did find words to express his sense of the injury he had received from the hand he most trusted, he declared he never would be reconciled to France till the Duke of Bourbon should repair to Madrid, and ask for pardon on his knees. "Ha!" cried the Queen, "it shall not be long before that French Cyclops finds the arrows of more than one king in his eye!" And, to make good her threat, she immediately despatched a trusty messenger to Ignatius, giving him full powers to relinquish all the contested points which had retarded the negotiation; and, at any sacrifice, to conclude a marriage between her son Don Carlos and the Archduchess Maria-Theresa, the presumptive heiress to the Imperial crown. Some other instructions, dear to the policy of Ripperda, were added; which, if brought to bear, would give the preponderance of power still more to Spain and to Austria, and place the French — where she had dashed the portrait of their monarch — at her feet.

Louis de Montemar passed several hours in close conference with the Sieur Ignatius on these events; on the circumstances which led to them (though Wharton's share in the leading movement was not then known); on the consequent instructions from the Spanish sovereigns; and in settling how much of the whole Louis was to declare to the Empress and her minister, in making the commanded concession, so as to appear rather to give than to concede.

"You must manage the preliminaries to-night with Sinzendorff," said the Sieur; "but, to-morrow, whether it be to return on my litter or in my hearse, I will see the Empress myself. When the triumphal arch is ready," added he, with one of those smiles which visited his dark countenance, like the shooting of a star, "the wounded hero is unworthy of its honours, that will not venture his life to pass through!"

Louis looked his assent to the Sieur's observation, with a smile bright as his own; and, soon after, the College bell reminded him that the time of his audience with the chancellor drew near. On his rising to obey its summons Ignatius laid down his pen from some letters he was writing,

and told him to rejoin him in that chamber the next morning by daybreak. "To-morrow," added he, "will epitomise the history of Europe for many a future year, and be the deciding epoch of your destiny."

The usual time of Louis's visit to the Chancellor Sinzendorff was an hour before midnight, immediately after his Excellency had left the card table of the Emperor; and as, from the intricacy of his new communications with the minister, Louis's present conference was much longer than ordinary, it was an hour beyond midnight before he left the chancellor's apartments.

Hurrying along, to get out of the interior galleries of the palace at so unseasonable an hour, at an abrupt turning into the large lighted rotunda where most of the passages terminated, he ran violently against a person wrapped in a splendid pelisse. He looked up to apologise, and beheld Duke Wharton. Louis sprang from the Duke, as if struck back by electricity; but Wharton grasped his arm. With an averted face, and a heart yearning to embrace the friend whose presence and whose touch obliterated all remembrance of resentment, Louis made another ineffectual struggle to break away; but the Duke, in a gaily affectionate voice, exclaimed, "I have clutched you, Chevalier Phaffenberg! and if you were Chevalier Proteus himself, you should not elude these ten fingers!" As he spoke, he threw his other arm round the waist of his friend, and seized his opposite arm also.

"Release me, Duke Wharton!" cried Louis, fully remembering his double promise to Ignatius and to the Empress; and, striving to recall the circumstances at the Electress's, which had excited his indignation, "This is a liberty——"

"That is nothing between friends," interrupted the Duke, in the same happy tone; "but if we are enemies, I am too old a soldier to release the prisoner who would cut my throat!"

"Duke Wharton," returned Louis, fearful of being subdued by accents so eloquent of former confidence, "when you see I would avoid you, this detention is at least ungenerous. By the friendship you claim, — and have, — no

longer withhold me! One day, I will thank you for your forbearance."

"You would thank me for that to which I make no pretensions. In this life of hard knocks, neither broken heads nor broken hearts can be healed by the promise of an unction; therefore, excuse me if I keep the good the gods provided me!"

Louis struggled with his subdued heart, as he unconsciously rested in the arms that held him prisoner.

"You have my sign manual against this selfish world!" resumed the Duke: "so, dear Montemar, come with me; and whatever may be your secret services here, they shall be as safe in my breast as in your own."

With a gasping breath, Louis declared he must not remain with him another moment.

"What! your Pastor uncle fears me, even here! he fears the lion, when his lamb is among wolves! I tell you, Louis, there is more in my heart towards you than you will believe, or may deserve! But, come with me, and you shall have that heart on the table!"

Happy to exonerate his venerable uncle, Louis impetuously declared that his interdict was withdrawn, but that other motives, not then to be explained, rendered a temporary estrangement as compulsory as ever. Wharton exulted in this amnesty from Mr. Athelstone, and urged it with every argument and device in his magic circlet. He was prevailing, vehement, and gaily reproachful; but, as he persevered in all beyond the usual measure of persuasion, Louis could not but, at last, feel such constancy very like persecution, and very unlike what he should have anticipated from the free spirit of the Duke. "But," whispered a monitor within him, "was the Duke's wanton sport with your concealment, when he recognised you, even under a false name, in the discourse at the Electress's,—was it consistent with belief in his candour,—with his present professions of attachment?"

As Louis stood in his trammelling arms, and, with a downward face, thought of these things, he became displeased, and, with a firm air, repeated his request to be relieved. The Duke persisted to hold him fast, with a little,

perhaps, mischievous raillery on his haste. Louis recollected the blush of Otteline; and, with a pang of resentment, while he determined to be no longer put from his duty, he said sternly, "Duke Wharton, let me go! This compulsion is insufferable. I will not be detained."

"De Montemar," returned the Duke, in a voice that suddenly became grave; and immediately releasing one arm, though he still held the other, "I have wrestled thus long with your caprice, to show you that I had forbearance. But I now read your changeful heart: go where it leads you. I once thought it was devoted to friendship, and to noble sacrifice! But," added he, after a short pause, and with a disdainful smile, "you are not what you were: you cling to the foot of the ladder, which I believed you even too proud to mount. So take what you seek: I bid you farewell!"

As he spoke, he relaxed his hand from the grasp he held of Louis's arm; and, with a smothered sigh, which he sought to hide under a cough, he turned hastily across the corridor. Louis's heart smote him.

"Did I not insult him by my flight in the gallery? I have been selfish and arrogant; I have been accessible to ill impressions; and, even now, to suspicions of the motives of him I once so devoutly honoured. Alas!" said Louis to himself, "I have not acted like a friend! I might have broken from him, since duty required it; but I need not thus have wounded him!"

As, at one instant of time, all these thoughts flashed over his mind, he stood, without attempting to follow his friend; but he could not help exclaiming, "Wharton!" Wharton still passed on. "He quits me in deserved resentment," said Louis, his heart overflowing with contrition; and, extricating his feet from the spot, where they had seemed rooted, he made two or three steps towards him.

"Wharton!" repeated he, when he drew near, "that farewell must not be for ever!"

Wharton turned round, with a lofty and serious air; "And why should you wish it otherwise?"

"Because," returned Louis, catching his hand, "I

value your friendship as my life, but not beyond my honour."

Wharton gazed a moment on his agitated countenance. In a softened voice, though yet maintaining his unusual gravity, he replied, "You could not suppose I should ask you to betray that in yourself which is my own impugnable estate!"

Louis did not speak; but with bent eyes, to conceal the tears which filled them, pressed the Duke's hand. Wharton returned the cordial re-assurance; and, with a smile playing through his seriousness, he added, "And least of all, when one of the dear sex I have so long adored to my cost holds your honour in the charming fetters you have just been hugging to your heart!"

Louis dropped the hand he was so affectionately clasping, and exclaimed with energy, "By that honour, I swear, that no amorous passion brought me hither to-night!"

"Nor any night, nor any morning?" replied Wharton, with more of his wonted gaiety. "I will believe just what you please: only make me a vow, that she shall not absorb you entirely; and though I admire the lady, and love the sex, I will promise never to wish a reversion in my favour."

Louis was vexed at this wild speech. He saw, that so far from Wharton having a suspicion that political objects employed him at Vienna, he really believed that his friend's visits to the palace were actuated by a passion for the Countess Altheim. Louis could not shut his eyes on another conviction,—that the Duke dishonoured the nature of the passion he supposed, by considering it rather an affair *pour passer le tems*, than a serious attachment for life. But, in spite of his admiration of the Countess, and of what had passed between them, Louis felt an insurmountable repugnance to say that his visits to her were to terminate in an indissoluble union; and, with a sudden bitterness of spirit towards Wharton himself, and the entanglements of his situation, he exclaimed, "You distract me by this determination, to believe that I am engaged in the sort of connection which you know my soul abhors."

"And what, dear De Montemar, do I know your soul

abhors?" returned the Duke, drawing his friend's arm within his, and walking with him down the passage: "the connection mine abhors is matrimony; a young Xantippe even now clips my sides with her everlasting bonds, like the spikes of a penance-girdle, piercing even to my heart."

"By the current of your wild attack," said Louis, with a crimsoned cheek, "I could not have guessed, that you meant an attachment which pointed to so serious an end."

"Serious enough, at the best!" replied the Duke, laughing; "and, in my case, I should say it is at the worst; could I not suppose a quality or two, even less to my liking, in your fair lady! She is too much of a female Machiavel for my easy nature; and would have me in the state-dungeons, before our honeymoon had shot her horns."

Louis was silent, and his heart beat even audibly. Should he speak a word more, he might betray the secret of the Empress,—of the Sieur,—of his father,—of the sovereign of the country, to which that father had devoted him!

Wharton and he were now at the outward gate of the palace. Louis attempted to withdraw his arm, but the Duke held it fast. "Nay, nay, my eager lover! you will not find her in the street! you must sup with me to-night."

"Not for the world."

"How?"

"We must part here, dear Wharton, and part friends,—eternal friends! But ask no questions."

"I will be hanged," cried the Duke, "if you are not in such awful mystery, that if you do not go home with me, and let me see that occult soul of thine, through the crystalline of generous Burgundy, I shall believe, (added he, in a whisper,) that you are too well with the Empress herself."

"Wharton!" cried Louis, dashing the Duke from him, "you will make me hate you."

"You could not, for your life and honours, dear petulant boy!" cried the Duke, with a frank-hearted laugh; "and, till we meet in feast or fray, give me thy gauntlet!"

He stretched out his hand. Louis regretted the violence with which he had spoken; but feeling the precipice on which he stood, and dreading further detention, he gave his hand with evident hesitation. Wharton shook it with gay cordiality; "What! faithless one!" cried he, "dost thou suspect I am to realise the frog and raven, and tear thee between beak and claw!"

He then pressed the hand he held, and, as he felt Louis's shake in his grasp, he added, with strong emphasis; "Well, haste away! but I would snatch *you*, from the snares which misled *my* youthful feet, in the paths you have now entered. I would lead you, where you may plant honour, and reap renown. Oh, De Montemar, I would put a royal heart into that breast, whose pulses are fed by the blood of kings! Start not! But thou must not grovel, and creep, and follow — where you may rise and lead! De Montemar, thou art enslaved and mocked. Come with me, and you are again free."

"Not for the best blood in my heart!" exclaimed Louis, now exulting in his knowledge of the great cause to which he had devoted himself. "You are mistaken, Wharton; and again, I must say, farewell!"

"Be it so," returned the Duke, relinquishing his hand; "but you will remember Philip Wharton, when it is out of the power, of even his irrepressible friendship, to extricate the son of the rich, the great Baron de Ripperda, — from the bonds and bondage of a too fair Semiramis, and her subtiler confidant!"

Louis now understood that the Duke did not mean a political slavery, in the speech which seemed to imply it; but a warning against the vassalage of the heart. Wharton certainly said enough, to open the mind of his friend to some suspicion of the perfection of his fair mistress's character; but, before he could rally himself to compose some safe answer, the Duke had disappeared into the universal darkness of the outer court.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Sieur Ignatius did as he had determined. He went, and alone, to the Empress, the following morning. What he had to propose, soon made her call the chancellor to the conference; and, during the discussion, the Sieur so ably adapted the mutual pretensions of the rival monarchs to the eagerness of their consorts to conclude a treaty, that nothing remained to be done, when he left the apartment, but to obtain the Imperial signature to what the Empress and her minister so heartily approved.

As Ignatius put a casket of golden arguments, adapted to the persuasion of certain members of the council into the hands of Sinzendorff, Elizabeth promised that the Emperor's decision should be sent to Vienna, as soon as he could collect his counsellors around him at the Luxemburg; to which palace he meant to go next morning, for a few days. Meanwhile, she recommended to the Sieur, and through him, to his secretary, that they should keep in strict seclusion; for, she apprehended, the indiscreet stir which the Queen of Spain had made, on the affront put upon her daughter, would excite an immediate attention in the ambassadors at Madrid, to some anticipation of her meditated revenge. All know, that the political train, laid by these honourable spies of nations, is as subtle as it is long, devious, and invisible; and, where suspicion once points, it is but the word of a moment to set the whole in a blaze. To avert such a catastrophe to Isabella's too open threats against France, Ignatius adopted this advice, being indeed the echo of his own judgment; and accordingly, he seemed to immure himself, as during his wounds; but he was amply occupied in arrangements, which only awaited the fiat of the Emperor to be brought into immediate action.

During this suspense, Ignatius received accounts from Sinzendorff, which proved the wisdom of their caution. He informed him, that visits, at unseasonable hours, had

been repeatedly exchanged between the French and other foreign ambassadors resident at Vienna; and that he knew, from indisputable authority, that a messenger had arrived from Paris, who was closeted with the French minister for many hours; and that, the same night, his Excellency was seen, without any of his accustomed attendants, gliding into the palace of the Electress of Bavaria. In another letter, Sinzendorff communicated to the Sieur, that he had certainly intelligence of a private supper, which had been given the preceding evening in the Electress's *boudoir*; no women were present, but herself and her Lady of the Key; while the men were, the French ambassador, the Dutch minister, a French philosopher from Berlin, the fierce ex-chancellor Count Stahlberg, and the Duke of Wharton. What was the subject of their deliberations, Sinzendorff could give no information; but he did not doubt, that it brooded mischief to the present crisis between Austria and Spain.

In Louis's nocturnal visits to the College, he gladly saw that little inconvenience remained to the Sieur, from his dangerous attack, excepting incidental headachs; and the scar on his forehead, which being recently cicatrised, he still covered with a black fillet. The cadaverous hue of his complexion could hardly be deepened by confinement; but Louis occasionally saw a more than common fire flash from his over-shadowed eyes, as he accidentally looked up from the papers he scrutinised. During the investigation, he never spoke more than to ask a question, or to give a direction respecting the business on which he was engaged; and generally answered his pupil's respectful adieu for the night, with a silent, though gracious nod.

Louis's long hours of solitude (for the whole of the Imperial family had accompanied the Emperor to his spring palace,) were passed at the château. And after he had performed his now brief vocation for the day, he generally read German authors from the Jesuits' library; or walked in the weedy wilderness, which had once been a garden. He now neither regarded the swift-flowing Danube, nor the gay groups which, on foot or in carriages, appeared in the distance on its margin. His meditations

were all self-centred on the past, the present, and the future. Often, during his deep reverie, he wondered at himself, that his mind should wander, and at such a crisis, from the great affair in which he was a sharer. A year ago had he speculated on what would have occupied his thoughts, in so important a political era of his life, he should have said,—"Exultation in the grand results of my father's patriotic genius; and satisfaction, that my noviciate talents had been employed in the glorious achievement!"

But, on the reverse, while he sat at the feet of statesmen, and was the agent between negotiating sovereigns, he found himself dwelling, hour after hour, on the private feelings of his heart. He was ready to quarrel with himself for this wretched perversity. In the quiet vales of Northumberland, he had lived in the full enjoyment of these feelings; but then his vagrant thoughts refused to dwell on tranquil happiness. He panted for distant realms, fields of perils, and renown. He was now in the midst of some of these invoked stations for action; and yet his inconsistent spirit would not abide in the scenes it had chosen! His meditations would extricate themselves from their patriotic objects; and, with obstinate tenacity, fasten themselves on the most selfish considerations;—on the friend he had loved, and had fled from! on the woman he believed he loved, and yet was glad to fly!

He recalled the several warnings he had received, at home and abroad, against the Duke; but the recollection of the natural and acquired advantages he possessed over all other men, presented themselves, of their own accord, to Louis; and, his spell-bound eyes, not seeing where the scale turned, he dismissed the subject. The image of the fair Otteline glided before his mind's eye, like the descent of Iris from the rainbow; all brilliancy and ambrosial beauty. He had only to articulate her name, to make the pulse pause in his heart, and a dissolving sensibility steal over all his senses.

"And yet," he murmured to himself, "fair as thou art, I feel a chill on my soul, whenever I think of pledging it to thee for ever. Oh, wherefore?" cried he; "she

is lovely, she is tender; but she has not that elevated look in those beautiful eyes, which used to mingle my highest thoughts with the soul of Cornelia! She has not that ineffable glance of exclusive affection, which shoots direct to the heart, and kindles a faith there, no doubts can extinguish!"

There was something in the parting words of the Duke, respecting the Empress and her *subtle confidant*, which had adhered to the memory of Louis, and continued to harass him with conjectures. By that confidant, the Sieur Ignatius, or the Countess Altheim, might have been understood; but it could not be the Sieur: Wharton had avowed his belief that an amatory attraction took his friend to the palace!

"And was she *subtle?*" Louis's heart revolted at the question; though he could not disguise from his clearer judgment, that it was she who had suggested to him the only incontrovertible mode of silencing the scandal, she had thought herself obliged by duty to sanction as a truth.

"It was not what I like," said Louis, trying to excuse her to himself. But had he uttered his own principles upon the subject, he would have said,—"It is what I not merely blame, but shrink from, as an unpardonable dereliction from female modesty!"

But in this case, he thought her zeal for the Empress, and her prepossession in his favour, had obliterated from her mind all consideration of what was due to herself; and the impelling motives made him find an apology and a pardon for the amiable delinquent.

"Yes," cried he, "she sacrificed her native delicacy, in a double respect, to the disinterestedness of her attachment. Did I not see the soft lustre of her eyes kindle with the blushes on her cheeks, as she looked downwards, to conceal this graceful shame, while uttering the delightful alternative?"

Louis was now far advanced in persuading himself that all was delightful in what, he believed, he was now bound in honour to make his own, whether it were to his wishes or not. "Her conduct could not be *subtilty*," continued he; "for she is ignorant that I am the *son of the rich, the great Ripperda.* Oh, Wharton, you wrong her!

there is nothing in my apparent present station to make a union with me an object of interest with the favourite of the Empress of Germany. She must prefer me for myself alone; and I am a wretch of ingratitude, ever to have found it necessary to convince myself by these doubting arguments!"

In the midst of such musings, he was surprised one evening by Gerard putting into his hand a letter addressed to "The Chevalier de Phaffenberg." The hand-writing was unknown to him; indeed, evidently a feigned one. He enquired whence it came. Gerard replied he did not know; the letter was brought by a man in the dark, who left it without saying a word. Louis broke the seal, and read as follows: —

"The carriage which conveys you to the Jesuits' College will be beset to-night in your usual route through the deserted street of Saint Xavier. The papers, of which you are to be the bearer, will be taken from you. Resistance would be vain, for the assailants are numerous. To avoid the loss of your trust, perhaps of your life, should your temerity contest the matter, take a different path to-night. But to no one, except your friend the Jesuit, mention this warning. Were it suspected, he that writes it would soon be put beyond the power of repeating the service. *Vale!*

"Tuesday Evening."

Louis thought of the attempted assassination of Ignatius. The letter he held in his hand, was a second confirmation, that notwithstanding the Sieur's severe precautions, the mysterious business of himself and his secretary was so little a secret to its enemies, that they knew exactly where to point even the most iniquitous means, when they thought such expedient to obtain information, or to create preventions. Who the anonymous friend was, who ran the risk implied at the close of the letter, Louis had no hesitation to believe must be the Duke of Wharton; for the Sieur had hinted only the night before, that he knew the Duke was one of a secret committee which sat nightly at the Bavarian apartments. Wharton must, then

have discovered, that his friend's visit to the palace had a higher aim than gallantry; and Louis felt something like a proud satisfaction in the conviction. The letter, he trusted, would be a sufficient pledge to Ignatius, of Wharton's fidelity to his friend; and that, whatever might be his bonds to a party, they could not tie his faith to connivance with a dishonourable act. This head of the subject being settled in his own mind; and being enabled, by the warning, to avoid the threatened violence; Louis would have given up his thoughts to the delicious enjoyment of gratefulness to so dear a friend, had he not trembled to think how far the Duke of Wharton's repulsed recognition of him might have led to so full a discovery, respecting the secret movements of the Sieur himself.

He saw that he must apprise Ignatius of the knowledge his enemies had acquired of his proceedings; and, in doing so, show the letter he had just received; and, while he declared his belief that Duke Wharton was the friendly writer, be obliged to relate what he had hitherto concealed; — his meeting, and at last enforced discourse with the Duke. As Louis reflected on the real harmlessness of that discourse, and on the necessity, at the present momentous juncture, to make his guardian master of every circumstance that might bear at all towards it, he felt the folly of his reserve: and though at the time he had persuaded himself that his silence arose from reluctance to agitate a wounded man, his conscience now accused him of mental cowardice, in shrinking from the pain he anticipated to himself in the torturing discussion.

"In flying one stroke," said he, "I have incurred twenty. Had I spoken at the time, I should only have had to narrate an event which happened without my seeking; and the worst could only have been, the Sieur's suspicions that the Duke wished to draw me to the Bavarian interest. But now, he may fancy something reprehensibly clandestine in my silence; and, at best, consider me imprudent and mean, if not absolutely insincere and worthless."

Though harassed by these reflections, he was not negligent of his trust. When he got into the carriage that was to convey him as usual to the College, it was himself

only he committed to the casualties of the evening. He did not take one of the papers with him; thinking it possible that the assailants, missing their prey in the old deserted street, would waylay him (as their emissaries had probably done Ignatius) in the College porch. The warning letter, (which he held in his hand, to tear piecemeal should he be attacked,) he thought would fully account to the Sieur for this precaution. Having placed his pistols in his waistcoat, he ordered the coachman to drive to the College, by a circuit in an opposite direction from Saint Xavier's; and being obeyed, without any sign of molestation, he reached Ignatius's cell at the accustomed hour.

The result of this dreaded interview with the stern friend of his father, was very different from what Louis had expected. On his entrance, he presented the anonymous warning, as his apology for not having risked the usual evening quota of state papers, through the threatened danger. Ignatius examined the handwriting and the seal. The former was a cramped text; the latter, a common diapered stamp.

"Who, in Vienna, can know you, to be thus interested in you, even as the Chevalier de Phaffenberg? You have been seen by none out of the routine of our business; excepting, indeed, that one accidental meeting with the Electress of Bavaria and her attendant! Surely, a five minutes' glimpse of your handsome person, Louis," added the Sieur, with a half smile, "could not have wrought so potently on the latter lady, as to excite her to such perilous intervention!"

"I am not quite the coxcomb to suppose it," returned Louis, with an answering smile, but a varying cheek, from the consciousness of what he had to confess. Without circumlocution, or reserve, he began and continued the whole narration of Duke Wharton's rencontre with him in the galleries of the palace; his escape from him the first time, and the Duke's consequent remarks to the Countess Altheim: but, he confessed, that, on their second meeting, he had found it impossible to break away, without suffer-

ing the conversation, which he now circumstantially repeated.

Ignatius spoke not a word, during the agitated recital of his pupil. While making his confession, Louis did not venture to look up under this awful silence; but, when he concluded, and his eyes were still riveted to the ground, the Sieur put his hand on his pupil's arm, and said, in an emphatic voice — "This honest narrative has established your character with me. I see by your looks, that it is not left to another to lecture you on the danger of your late concealments: I leave you, therefore, in that respect, to your own admonitions. But I will not withhold my entire approbation of the dexterity with which you parried every question of that serpent Englishman. Do not frown at the severity of the epithet. Did you know him, as well as he is known at Paris, and in this capital, you would not doubt that he has many properties of that wreathing reptile besides his glossy surface!"

"And yet, sir," cried Louis, "I believe it is he who has ventured his safety to give me this warning!"

"It may be," returned the Sieur, "and he is no less a serpent still. But, for your escape, and that of the papers, I am obliged to him; and we will dismiss the subject. There is another, on which I must give you a necessary hint; the Countess Altheim."

At that name, the conscious blood rushed into the before blanched cheek of Louis. The Sieur paused a moment, regarding his pupil with a steady look, before he went on.

"You have too much of the woman in your face, young man," said he, "to keep your own secret, however faithful you may be of another's. I see the pretty favourite has gained her point with your heart; but do not allow your lips to commit your honour, till this public affair is finished. You will then see your father, and must receive his sanction before you can propose the alliance. A rash step now would offend him for ever."

Louis bowed his acquiescence to this command, but it was not with a constrained air. The Sieur saw that he was grateful for the gentleness with which his confession

had been treated, and respectfully obedient to the injunction which concluded the discourse.

Louis returned to the château by the same track he had left it, therefore reached his home in safety. The next day passed as the former; and having just finished his hermit stroll, under the silver light of a bright March moon, he was slowly retracing his steps to the house, when he met Gerard, who told him the Sieur Ignatius was in the saloon. This unexpected visit alarmed Louis. He instantly feared that some fatal turn had taken place with regard to the completion of their labours, and that the Sieur had come to announce it. He hastened, however, to his summons.

Wrapped, as before, in his large dark mantle, Ignatius was standing in the middle of the room. The black fillet that pressed down his heavy brows, and the hearse-like plumes which pended over them, cast such flickering shadows over his grey visage, as he stood in the moonlight, that he seemed to Louis, more like the awful spectre of his guardian, than his living self.

Louis thought he saw his fears confirmed. He approached, he drew very near to him, and still the Sieur did not speak. Louis could not bear the suspense, and exclaimed, "Sir, you have ill news to tell me?"

"Look on my face," replied Ignatius, in a tone of voice from which neither good nor evil could be gathered, "and try to read what sort of news the disciplined blood of a tried politician will declare."

Louis fixed his eyes as he was commanded, but it was with apprehension; for he thought this beginning was to prepare him for the ruin of their cause. His eyes shrunk from the proud fire which shone in the steady gaze of the Sieur. It might arise from the pride of triumph, or be the bright emanation of determined fortitude! But the latter idea possessed his pupil. The extent of the misfortune he dreaded to hear; as, again and again, he had been warned that his father's honour was involved in the fate of this treaty.

"Speak, dear sir!" cried he; "I cannot guess what has happened, from your countenance."

"Yet," said Ignatius, "it is easy to interpret from yours, what you believe ought to be legible in mine! But, Louis de Montemar, if you are to follow your father's career,—to this moveless complexion you must come at last. Else, vain will it be to discipline your tongue, if your unmanageable blood betray the story. Know, then, that our labours have been successful. The Emperor has given his full consent to every demand of Spain."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Louis, clasping his hands, and dropping into a chair. The Sieur seated himself beside him, and, without noticing his emotion (for all the son was then in Louis's heart), he entered into the details of the business. The Imperial family had returned that morning to Vienna. The Empress immediately summoned Ignatius to attend her. He obeyed; and received from her Majesty those particulars of the Emperor's assent, which were now recounted to the attentive secretary. The Sieur then added, that after he quitted the palace, he referred, for further instructions, to a packet which the last despatch from Spain had brought in the Queen's letter-case; and which, being superscribed to himself, with the additional words, "Only to be opened in the event of the Emperor acceding to our proposals," he had laid aside until the present, which was the appointed moment.

"As the conditions were fulfilled," continued the Sieur, "I broke the seal; and the contents are these. A letter from the King, commanding me to announce to their Cæsarean Majesties the arrival of his ambassador at Vienna. He will even make his entrance into the city within eight and forty hours after the information is communicated to the council. "That ambassador, Louis de Montemar," added Ignatius, "is your father."

Louis sprang from his seat. The Sieur rose also, and continued; "In reward of his high services, the King makes him his representative here, with the restitution of all his hereditary honours, and an establishment answerable to his dignity."

This part of the information Ignatius addressed to ears that heard him not. The word *father!* that sacred idea, which had so long filled the heart and the hopes of Louis,

—which had seemed the goal whither all his ambitions and his duties pointed;—this holy image had sealed up his sense, to dwell upon the one idea of his expected presence. With the announcement of his near approach, Louis thought of nothing else; and, covering his face with his hands, the tears of filial love—of filial triumph—of gratitude to Heaven, that he should at last behold that honoured countenance, poured from his eyes, and bathed his hands. Ignatius gazed on him,—gazed on his heaving —his sobbing breast. A tear of sympathy started into even his Stoic eye, as he turned away and walked in silence down the room.

It was some minutes before Louis could recall himself from the inward temple of his soul, where his grateful heart had prostrated him before the Giver of all good. When he looked up, he saw the Sieur at a distance, with his back to him, and leaning near the window which looked towards the Danube. Louis approached him;—"Your goodness," said he, "has pardoned a son, showing some natural emotion at so sudden an intimation of soon seeing the most honoured, the most beloved of parents?"

"Such sins are easily forgiven," returned Ignatius, with downward eyelids. "To-morrow, at this hour, your father will be at the *Palace d'Espagne;* the residence, under the late dynasty, of the Spanish ambassador at Vienna. You must be there to greet him."

Louis's eyes answered in the affirmative, for his lips denied their office, and the Sieur proceeded in his further orders. He said, that circumstances rendered it necessary, that he should meet the Duke; therefore as time pressed, his pupil must perform all that was to be done at the palace. He must go that night at ten o'clock to the Chancellor Sinzendorff, and deliver to him those three packets. Ignatius had laid several on the table, before the entrance of Louis, to which he now pointed: there were other packets to be presented the same night to the Empress; "of whom," continued the Sieur, "Sinzendorff will see the propriety of requesting an immediate audience. You are to announce to her the instant approach of the Duke de Ripperda, as the Spanish ambassador; and you

must intimate, that the nomination of the Duke is meant as a peculiar mark of the Spanish King's friendship for their Cæsarean Majesties. He parts with a man, to do them honour, whose presence is as dear to his heart as invaluable to his interests."

"This will be a hard trial of my diplomatic skill," rejoined Louis, with a happy smile, "to speak of him only as an ambassador."

"You will not, however, show yourself his son," replied the Sieur, "if you do not put that restraint upon your feelings. Whatever may be his years, he is yet but a puling boy, who is not master of his face, and the veins which colour it. Remember, it is a *man* I have engaged to present, in you, to the Duke of Ripperda; and that it is he, who exacts of you, to name him this night in the Empress's *boudoir*, with as cool an aspect as if you were announcing the arrival of a perfect stranger."

"Ah, sir!" exclaimed Louis, "who can name the Duke de Ripperda, with the cool utterance which they might give to almost any other man? Is he not loved every where, where known? And where he is only heard of, is he not universally honoured? And can a son name such a father without emotion? Oh, sir, send some other messenger, if I am to act an impossibility!"

"Well," replied Ignatius, throwing back his lofty plumes, "do your best in this commission; and I doubt not the father you are so proud of will be satisfied with his son."

"I will do my best," cried Louis, seeing that the Sieur was moving to depart; "and, oh, dearest sir, tell my revered father how impatient I am to meet him—to kneel at his feet—to be clasped in his arms!" The last words were hardly articulated, from his increasing emotion, and ere he recovered to look up again, the Sieur had left the apartment—and he saw him no more!

When the happy Louis found himself alone, he threw himself into a chair, to indulge the luxury of his feelings, to bless the time-honoured name of his father; to weep with mingled recollections over the long interval which had passed since his widowed arms had resigned him. a

babe, to the tears of his grandfather, now numbered with the dust. He thought of that good old man's tender care, of the paternal guardianship of his uncle of Lindisfarne; of his benediction when they parted, and the sacred letter which he put into his hand, as the last legacy of his dying mother. In that, she spoke to her only son, as from her seat in heaven, exhorting him to love and honour his father, as the object in his heart nearest to his God! Louis drew the letter from the case in which he preserved it; and pressing it to his lips, on his knees, as he would have done her sacred hand, he there uttered the fulness of his heart in vows to obey her behest: "to love that father, on whom his conscious eyes had never rested, with a double portion of his spirit, for the sake of that father's own noble nature; and for hers, who had resigned her life, in giving him to existence."

The perusal of this letter, and its consequent reflections, diffused a holy stillness over the happiness which now occupied the heart of Louis. When the time approached for the fulfilment of his duty at the palace, he collected the royal packets; and putting them in his bosom, as the clock struck ten, he entered the carriage with a blissful serenity over his mind, that seemed to breathe of paradise.

CHAPTER XXI.

Louis delivered the letters of Ignatius to the chancellor; and in as few words, and with as much composure, as he could command, he announced the near approach of the Spanish ambassador. Sinzendorff fixed his observing glance on the fluttering lip that proclaimed the honoured name, and his doubts were confirmed. He read the letters; and then remarked, that his Imperial master would be particularly gratified by the promptitude of this arrival. The intended ambassador must have been sent forward, to be in readiness for the proper moment of his official appearance;

and this preparation fully proved the King of Spain's honourable dependence on the fair dealing of the cabinet of Austria. Again he fixed his eyes on the face of his self-restrained auditor; and, after expressing himself in terms of high respect with regard to the Duke de Ripperda, and applauding the decisive step he had taken in accepting the embassy, he became fully satisfied that it was the son of the Duke he saw before him. The chancellor smiled within himself at his own discovery, and at the attempted concealment by the Empress; but, without observing on either, he addressed Louis still as the secretary De Phaffenberg, and proposed their going immediately to the Altheim apartments.

"We shall certainly find her Majesty there," said he; "for the Emperor passes some hours to-night with his confessor, and the Empress told me she meant to enjoy the time in confidential discourse with the Countess Otteline.

Louis followed the statesman to the imperial *boudoir;* and, as he expected, there he found the gracious Elizabeth, with her beautiful favourite, in close conference. He announced that the Chevalier was in the ante-room, with a commission from the Sieur Ignatius.

"Something extraordinary, by the hour!" cried the Empress. "I am ready to see him."

Louis entered. He did not look to the side where the Countess stood; but, approaching his father's illustrious friend with a steadiness of step that surprised himself, and with less visible emotion than he could have hoped, he delivered to her the message from Ignatius. It closed with the Sieur's apology for not having delivered it in person. He was obliged to pass the night in necessary preliminaries to joining the ambassador, in the morning, at St. Polten; in the evening, he would enter with him into Vienna.

The Empress's bright eyes shot a radiant glance on the modest bend of the young secretary's head as he concluded; and, suddenly clasping the Countess in her arms, she exclaimed, "*Ave Maria!* This is the crown of the Incas!" The Countess did not comprehend the fulness of her meaning, neither did Louis quite understand it. Sinzendorff thought, that if disappointment had rendered Isabella

rash in her threats, success seemed to have a similar effect on Elizabeth, by inflating her with hopes not less alarming. He believed he read in this extraordinary exclamation that she anticipated a no small share in the wealth of the New World, by her influence over the promised ambassador; and that she would make the marriage settlement for her daughter an abundant dowry for herself. Whatever were her thoughts, her face was refulgent with animation; and receiving the packets of Ignatius from the hand of Louis with one of her most gracious smiles, she commanded him to take what entertainment the Countess Altheim would afford him, while she should retire with the chancellor to examine the papers in her hand.

Louis bowed in obedience, and the Empress and her counsellor withdrew. She smiled to herself, as she closed the door, on this auspicious hour for the lovers, for such she determined it should be. She had herself fanned the admiration of the young secretary into the flame, which she now saw kindling on his cheek, as, with downward eyes, he beheld himself on the point of being left alone with its object! From the first hour of his beholding her, until this present moment, the Empress had condescended to be the adviser and the confidante of her beautiful friend. She loved her too sincerely, not to assist in effecting so illustrious a means, as a marriage with the son of Ripperda, of reinstating her in the rank she had lost by her widowhood. But, with all this zeal in her cause, the Imperial Elizabeth did not betray the secret of Ripperda: she merely hinted to the ambitious Otteline, that the Chevalier de Phaffenberg was other than he seemed, and a marriage with him would place her at the height of her desires. "But," added the Empress, "there may exist powers to counteract the wishes only, of the truest lover: you must therefore lose no opportunity of binding his honour."

With these views, she regretted the week at the Laxemburg, which had necessarily separated the favourite from the object of her present aim; but when he appeared at the palace with these important tidings, the Empress gave way to every glad anticipation; and, hoping all things from his unsuspecting and ardent nature, she seized the first oppor-

tunity of leaving him with the Countess; hardly doubting that, under the present heart-opening circumstances, he would reveal every secret of his rank, his name, and future plans, to make her his for ever.

Louis no sooner found himself alone with the resistless Otteline, than his throbbing pulse reminded him that his guardian's exhortation was in danger. In spite of himself, his eyes had stolen a glance towards her as the Empress withdrew; and her personal charms seemed to break upon him that night, in fuller lustre even than before, when he thought that nothing could have increased the perfection of her beauty. Their former meetings were always in a morning, when the dress is more enveloped, and consequently less of the figure is displayed: this was the first time he had seen her at a later hour; and she was habited as she had left the imperial drawing-room. Her dress was white; and her fair arms and snowy bosom, decorated with jewels, drew the eye to forms that might drive the sculptors of Greece to despair. Her golden tresses were coiled with the same gorgeous bands; while one glittering ringlet, escaped from its confinement, waved over her spotless neck, as if it were the wing of love fluttering towards the guarded regions of her heart. She caught the glance, and the almost smothered sigh, with which Louis affected to turn his attention towards a cage of birds which stood near him.

She did not appear to observe his embarrassment; but, gently echoing the sigh, remained leaning against the pedestal of a vase of flowers, with her eyes fixed on the profile of his face. She guessed that he saw nothing in the gilded cage, but her image in his mind. Again she sighed; and with such an expression, that Louis felt it thrill through his frame. He turned his head, and their eyes met: hers were full of entrancing softness; his of a grateful passion, which he would fain have rendered less distinct. She smiled tenderly, and stretched her arm towards him. In that moment, he remembered how they had separated. he was again in the same position,—her hand in his,—and clasped to his lips! The brilliant roses on her cheeks did not lose their brightness, in this speechless but eloquent

avowal of his love. But the Empress had told her to require *words !*

Her fair fingers trembled in his, when she falteringly articulated, " Chevalier ! you have been so long absent — I thought ——" She paused, and looked down.

" Not," exclaimed he, " that I had forgotten to be grateful ?"

She slowly raised her eyes towards his ; and while the softest tears swam over her own, and gemmed a dimpled smile, she half whispered, " The heart is a coward !"

" Never yours !" cried he, forgetting his determined self-restraint, in the bewitching mazes of her thousand beauties,—in the resistless fascination of her words. With a burning blush, she sunk into a chair ; but, still yielding her hand to his fervent pressure, she suffered him to drop upon one knee by her side.

" Never can you doubt," cried he, " where you have once confided."

She averted her head, and shook it mournfully. A tear fell on his hand : Louis's soul was on his lips as he kissed away that tear. The Countess attempted to rise, stifling her sobs. He had now no remembrance of any thing but herself : she was agitated, distressed ; and he the cause ! He essayed to speak, but emotion prevented his utterance ; he trembled, and grasped her hand : she felt the strong pulsation of his heart, and softly murmured —" This ambassador arrives, and you will go !" She interrupted herself ; and struggling again to rise, exclaimed in disorder, " Oh, that I had never listened to our last conference !"

Louis detained her on her seat. He must have been dull as the iron rock, and hard as its material, had he hesitated to understand and to reply to this agitation — this language ; but words were inadequate to express the sympathy which seemed to dissolve all his faculties in the one feeling of unutterable love. He could only kneel at her feet, and clasp the hand he had detained to his throbbing eyes.

Her exulting heart believed itself now near the goal of all its winding movements : a positive declaration of his love ; and an unequivocal solicitation of her hand in veri-

table words! Another step, and this bond of honour would be hers. But she did not permit the triumph of her thoughts to rise upon the managed scene of her countenance; all there was retreating softness: yet, allowing her arm to drop, as if unconsciously, on his shoulder, with the sweet familiarity of perfect confidence, she gently said, "And may I believe, that you love me well enough to make me yours, in spite of the world's harsh prejudice against a birth that was not noble? Can you be determined to bear me up against that world? For she who is the favourite of the Empress has many enemies; and when she is known to be beloved by you, she will have many more. Ah, Chevalier! against all this, may I believe that you will be true?"

This demand, though put with all the force of exquisite tenderness, giving itself without reserve to the fidelity of implied attachment, contained words that recalled Louis from the delirium of passion; and made him ask himself, how *true* he had kept his engagement with Ignatius?—how *true* he had maintained his *determination,* to preserve his duty to his father? He was, even now, on the point of dishonouring both, by uttering the very vow against which he had been so solemnly enjoined!

Shocked at the oblivion, in which all memory of his duty had lain for the last half hour, and indignant with himself, that his consequent discovery of a more than reciprocal passion had betrayed the Countess to the last decisive question, he started from his knees, and said in a hurried voice, "I am not my own: I dare not answer as my heart would dictate. In pity, then — in honour — most lovely, most beloved of women! allow my lips to be silent — for a time."

She hastily rose from her chair. "I do not understand you, Chevalier!" She gasped for breath, and looked around her, as if for the Empress's protection. With increased agitation, he exclaimed, "Despise my weakness, my apparent indecision, but do not doubt my heart! Do not doubt the honour, that would sooner immolate that heart's dearest wishes, than make them all its own, by one breach of my positive duty."

What were her present thoughts, he could only guess, by the quick heaving of her bosom; for she drew her long hair, now dishevelled by the late disorder of her motions, over her face, while she attempted to shake off the fond grasp with which he clung to her.

"You do doubt me!" cried he.

"You are mysterious; and I have no alternative."

"Oh," repeated he, "does the friend of the Empress, the confidante of statesmen! does she doubt the honour of mystery?"

The Countess no longer struggled to release her hand. She turned on him a look of re-assurance. But what she would have said, the enchanted heart of Louis could only translate by its own imaginations; for the door of the interior apartment opened, and the Empress and her counsellor re-appeared.

Otteline, in a beautiful disorder of smiles and blushes, moved to meet her Majesty; and Louis, bowing to her advancing step, remained where his Circe had left him. The Empress entered, as she had departed, full of animation; and without appearing to observe that any thing particular had passed between her favourite and the young secretary, she proceeded to speak of the letters she had just been reading: one was from the Queen of Spain, the other from Ripperda himself. She turned to Louis, with a peculiar smile; "Chevalier," said she, "I must be your patroness with this great man. If you have any suit to proffer, trust it with me."

Louis coloured deeper than the scarlet on her robe; but did not trust his eyes towards the Countess. The Empress resumed the discourse to Sinzendorff; narrating her first acquaintance with Ripperda, when he came a widower to her father's court, on a mission from the States-general. She expatiated on the amplitude of his character; adding, that it was a sure proof of the King of Spain's own talents, that he knew so well how to distinguish, and to appropriate the genius of such a man as the Duke de Ripperda.

For the first time in his life, Louis heard the praises of his father, as the whirring of an indistinct sound. Absorbed by the new emotions which laboured in his heart,

he had no eyes but for the tremulous form, no ears but for the low, quick sighs, of his enrapturing Otteline. He had no thoughts but of wonder, how he could ever have paused for a moment in believing her all-perfect in mind, as well as in body; in feeling her, all-sweet, devoted love, as she was all-resistless loveliness. "Ah," said he to himself, "Ignatius might see her unmoved; but my father, who has loved excellence in woman's form, has only to see her, to bless the happy destiny of his son!"

The Empress, by a side-glance, read his soul in his eyes; and, stealing a pressure of congratulation on the arm of the Countess, with apparent unconcern, turned to Sinzendorff, and exclaimed: "But, chancellor! before we part for the night, I must not forget what might have been a notable discovery, had not this happy promptitude in Ripperda's arrival put all beyond the power of manœuvre. Otteline, show our chancellor the letter."

The Countess took an open letter from a locked casket on the table, and put it into his hand.

"Read it aloud, for general benefit," said the Empress, "there is nothing more improving to politicians, than the *faux pas* of a rival."

The chancellor looked towards the door.

"Shoot the bolt, Chevalier de Phaffenberg," cried the Empress; "His Excellency seems to suspect the vestibule."

Louis obeyed, and returning to the side of Sinzendorff, as the pointing hand of her Majesty commanded, his Excellency began to read. The superscription was to Madame la Comtesse Altenstein, and the contents as follows: —

"Apprise the fair head of so many faithful members! that the power which threatens our existence, is now so gorged with its various prey, as to have fallen asleep. It dreams of empire; and talks its secrets to a darkness full of eyes, and in a solitude of more observation than the ear of Dionysius. To-night, I will bring a good account of *one, at least,* of its mining emissaries; while a sure train is laid under the feet of *the rest.*"

When the chancellor ceased reading, and was examining the handwriting, Louis thought of the caution he had received the preceding evening. Dreading a similar attack

might waylay Ignatius next morning, in his journey to the ambassador, (when the faithful Jesuit would be attended by no stronger guard than the unweaponed arm of Martini,) his anxious pupil, full of alarm, abruptly asked the date of the letter.

"Yesterday morning," replied Sinzendorff, folding up the paper; "and since we cannot count the loss of any of our members, we must conclude this doughty champion, whoever he may be, has failed in his pledge to the lady, to whom he has devoted his sword."

"Or rather his dagger!" replied the Empress; "we have found they do not challenge with fairer weapons. But now, let us vote thanks to the vigilant hand that intercepted this bungling piece of treason, and pass to a pleasanter subject. My Otteline found the fairy favour!"

"And by what mortal interference?" enquired the chancellor, as, with a bow of acquiescence to the Empress, he returned the letter to her friend.

"While I was at the Laxemburg, a bundle of letters collected themselves in this drawer," replied the Countess, putting her hand upon a part of the table in which was an aperture to receive, and to hold in safety, all that might arrive during her absence; "and only returning to-day, I had not time to examine my correspondence, till about an hour or two ago, while I was waiting for the Empress. In turning them over, I saw this directed, as you see, to the Electress's Lady of the Key. I know that she is the repository of her mistress's secrets; and it was possible this letter might contain some of them. I thought the handwriting was that of the envious Count Stahlberg. Accident had conducted it to me," added the beautiful Otteline, with an exulting smile; "and I would not throw away my fortune: — I broke the seal."

At the last avowal, Louis sprang back from the spot on which he stood, as if he had trodden on a serpent. The resounding of the floor under his recoiling feet turned all eyes upon him.

"Monsieur Phaffenberg!" cried the chancellor, "you forget in whose presence you are?"

Louis put his hand to his forehead, as he strove to recover

his appalled senses. He turned to the Empress: "I have no words, in which to beg your Majesty's forgiveness for this! But such irritability shall never offend again!"

"You are ill, then?" enquired Elizabeth, with more graciousness, than accorded with the brow of the chancellor.

"I was," replied Louis, smiling ghastly, "but I am perfectly well now. And if his Excellency can pardon the interruption, may I entreat your Majesty to command him to proceed."

The statesman's frowns had not been those of displeasure at the young secretary's revulsionary indecorum. He had seen enough between the Empress and her favourite, to convince him, that, whoever that young man was, they intended he should be the duped successor of the late infatuated Count Altheim. Sinzendorff cherished an Austrian's pride, against the pretensions of the ignoble Otteline; whom he knew to be as little elevated in mind, as in birth; though she had ambition enough to overtop the crown of her mistress. He felt resentment against the Empress, for such pertinacity in thrusting her haughty favourite into the ranks of Austrian nobility; he despised the favourite herself; and fully comprehending the recent extraordinary action, and words of her meditated victim, he determined to let him see a little deeper into the character of his scheming mistress. When Louis hastily uttered his apology, Sinzendorff bowed; and receiving a nod from the Empress, to proceed in his remarks, he turned to the Countess, whose investigating eyes were fixed on the suddenly pale and averted face of her lover.

"And so, madam," resumed the chancellor, with a slight smile and bend of his head, "you made the *Lady of the Key* relinquish her trust, *vi et armis?*"

"I did," replied the favourite, recalling herself with an air of dignity; "and finding, from what you have just read, that mischief was intended towards some of the Empress's agents, when her Majesty honoured me with her presence this evening, I ventured to suggest the expediency of showing the paper to you."

"You have done warily, madam!" replied Sinzendorff.

"Admirably!" exclaimed the Empress. "It is always wisdom to learn what have been the intentions of an enemy, even after he has lost the battle.

Elizabeth concluded with an observation on the promptitude of affection; "It acts, while mere prudence only deliberates."

"I am happy to meet your Majesty's, and his Excellency's approbation," returned the Countess, glancing by a side-look at the abstracted countenance of her lover. "They add an incontrovertible sanction to my principle, that real love is a dictating sentiment, whence there is no appeal. It is omnipotent, or it is nothing. My sovereign and my husband (the last word was uttered tremulously) should be alike, the arbiters of my actions, and of my life!"

"And of your honour, too, madam!" said the Chancellor, with a biting smile.

Astonished at the manner of this question, and jealous of any implied censure, before the man to whom all her attractions were then directed, for a moment she suffered the blaze of anger to escape her eyes: Louis caught the flash in its passage to the statesman, and, like a blighting lightning, it shot into his soul. Drawing herself up with an air of proud resentment — "My honour, sir," said she, "is consecrated to my friends; and, ill would it serve them, could it be made the slave of their enemies. Besides," added she, with a scornful smile, "stratagems are notoriously as fair in the cabinet as in the field!"

"Were we not all, sooner or later, of your creed, madam," returned the Chancellor, with a bow, "we should make sorry figures in either contest! therefore you will pardon an old practitioner, for putting a young disciple a little on the defensive. But, while we approve this dexterous act of diplomacy, to prevent awkward consequences from enquiries about detention, &c., we must consider how to dispose of the letter!"

"Give it to me, my honest Chancellor," said the Empress, taking it from his hand, and not very well pleased with his manner to her favourite; "dead men tell no tales!" and, with the words, she lighted the letter at a

candle, and threw the flaming embers into the fender of a stove that stood near.

Louis listened, and gazed, and wondered: — listened, and gazed on the woman, so lately transcendently lovely in his eyes; wondered, that her voice had ever sounded sweetly in his ear; that her face could ever have appeared otherwise than harsh and repelling! Appalled at what he now witnessed from her, and from them all three, and at the idea of how he might, a few minutes before, have pledged his faith, beyond recall, to one of such abhorrent principles, he inwardly blessed the caution of Ignatius: and, as he continued for some time to stand, more like an automaton than a living being, he heard no more of the conversation, till the Empress dismissed the council; and whispered to him at parting—" To-morrow your rank will be declared: so, for the last time, adieu, Chevalier de Phaffenberg!"

Louis put her hand mechanically to his lips, and withdrew, without casting another glance at his so lately worshipped Otteline. Sinzendorff was satisfied with what he had done towards opening the eyes of this ingenuous young man; and, without committing himself, by making a remark on what had passed, he wished him a good night at the door of the gallery.

Louis ran through the other passages, as if, by the swiftness of motion, he could fly the thoughts which clung like harpies to his heart. The palace clock struck one; and the extinguishers of the lights which illumined the various avenues, appearing in every direction, rapidly involved the whole in the sombre hue that suits the hour of rest. He passed through the grand quadrangle, to the portal, at which he had ordered his carriage to be in waiting. At the moment he issued from the door, he was seized in the strong grasp of a man. He could not see by what sort of a person; the night being profoundly dark, and the lamps over the great gates too distant to cast more than a gleam sufficient to show where the carriage stood. Before he could make even an attempt for extrication, the person whispered in his ear,—" On your life, do not return to the château to-night. Its porch is filled with your father's enemies!"

Ere Louis could reply, his arms were released, and he was alone. But it was the faithful heart of Wharton which had beat against his; it was his well known accents which had announced this second warning! Louis looked around, and listened. He could see nothing but his dingy vehicle; hear nothing but the champing of his horses' bits, as they impatiently awaited his arrival.

"Coachman," said he, as he threw himself into the carriage; "drive to the Vien, and there I will give you further orders."

The fatal letter that dissolved the bright vision of love, which, a few hours before, revelled in his breast, had proved the stability of friendship; it corroborated the timely caution of Wharton's warning epistle: therefore Louis could not doubt, (had it been possible for him to doubt any thing from Wharton!) the veracity of his present information. Before he cast a second thought on the use he ought to make of it, he could not refrain from comparing the steady disinterestedness of his much calumniated friend, with what they who disesteemed him would have foretold of his conduct in such circumstances.

"Yes," cried he, "generous Wharton! in spite of all, thou wilt fasten my soul to thee, for all thy links are honourable! Oh, what had I to do with love, — with women's smiles and sorceries? Why should I give up my soul to lie in the lap of effeminate sensibilities, when I had such a friend as this to occupy my whole heart with manly aspirations,— with devotion to virtue alone! I detest myself for my weakness, — for my entrapped vanity! For, though I saw her beautiful, and thought her charming, yet this marvellous perfection never touched my heart till she smiled upon me, and looked — I will not think how she looked," cried he, striking his forehead, "else the devil that she conjured within me will undo me again! Oh, woman! — syren woman! From the first thou wert a tempter, — a creature to try the virtue of man, to make him feel his bonds to earth! While friendship, divine union of soul to soul, asserts to his immortal spirit its derivation from heaven!"

Louis was wrapped in these reflections when the coachman stopped, and demanded further orders.

"I will get out here," replied he; "and you may go to the College stables."

When the man obeyed, and Louis found himself alone in the street, he knew it was not far from one of the gates which led to the Wiedon suburb. Notwithstanding the danger which menaced his approaching the château, not to return to it to-night was what he could not reconcile to his sense of the trust reposed in him. It would be abandoning its repository of state secrets to the depredators, should they, on missing him this second time, resolve on entering the house itself. Its situation was perfectly lonesome; and he could not suppose that persons so well informed of his movements could be ignorant that it contained no other domestics than Gerard, and, lately, his wife. To leave it to these unwary guardians, when danger was so near, he believed, would be as distinct a desertion of his duty as to deliver every paper it contained into the hands of his father's enemies. On these grounds, he thought it right to proceed immediately to the château; but not by a path likely to be infested by the persons planted to waylay him.

When through the gate, he considered a minute which would be the securest circuit; and then determined on a sweep by the river, to the back of the mansion. By this means, he thought, he should unite all that prudence could demand, with his resolution not to allow the assailants any advantage from an undue care of himself. The way through the hinder premises of the desolate street of St. Xavier was intricate and bewildering. The place having been destroyed by a ravaging fire, was totally deserted; and Louis trod the devious alleys, without meeting a living soul of whom he could ask a direction to the water side. The absolute silence assured him of safety so far; and he continued to grope his way over the mouldering piles.

When he emerged into the open part of the suburbs, the feeble light of the stars, being no longer traversed by the deep shadows of close buildings, afforded him sufficient guidance. The waters of the Danube glimmered at some distance on his right; while the murky line, which clouded

his view to the left, informed him he was within sight of the avenue which led direct to the ambush he must avoid. He kept on towards the river; and, having reached its banks, turned along the margin to the path that led to the château. After half an hour's walk, he entered on the woodland, which declined from the garden wall to the Danube; and when he arrived at the wall itself, he found it a rampart of stupendous height, and quite perpendicular: but he who had climbed the beetling rocks of Northumberland, and gazed downwards from their eagle summits with the careless eye of security, had no difficulty in surmounting a few feet, more or less, of any structure raised by man. The old crumbling stones made a breach wherever he placed his ascending foot; but he soon gained the top, and, jumping down into the garden (for on that side the wall was merely a parapet), he ran swiftly through the grass-grown walks to the terrace before the house.

He found the door open. He entered; but, closing it after him, pushed the strong bolts into their guard, and then felt his way through the midnight darkness of the passages to the kitchen, where he expected to find Gerard on the watch for his return. The honest German was asleep in a huge wooden chair, by the side of a large half-burnt log, now extinguished; and a lamp, almost reduced to its last drop of oil, flickered on the table, near an unlighted candle and a flambeau.

Louis lighted the candle; and hesitated a moment, whether he should awaken Gerard to accompany him to the examination it was proper to make, or leave all in quiet till he had seen whether the ambuscade were still in the porch. Thinking it most prudent to go alone, he took the candle, and proceeded to the hall, where he left his light in an obscure corner, and then, without noise, opened the great door. With his pistol in his hand, he crossed the court-yard, and drew near the gates; but the wood of which they were constructed being very deep, and studded with iron, he listened in vain for a sound from the other side. Judging that it was their thickness which prevented his hearing some sign of the intended assailants, and wishing to assure Ignatius that he had obtained sensible proof of

the veracity of this second warning, he determined to seek further.

He felt his way up the rough stone-work of the piers of the arch, and, clambering over it, planted himself behind the great stone escutcheon of the Phaffenberg arms, which crested its architrave. He strained his eye downwards; but could perceive nothing through the double night of a moonless sky, and the obscuring umbrage of the trees. He thought he heard a low murmur, as of whispering voices beneath; but he could not be sure that it was not the wind in the branches. He leaned over to make closer observation, and had nearly been precipitated into the midst of his enemies; for a part of the ancient stone-work gave way, and fell with a clattering noise upon the pavement in front of the porch. Louis had caught by the iron supports of what remained, and so was saved from too well informing himself of who were below.

The effects of the accident gave him immediate notice of what he had escaped. Some of the heavy fragments had fallen upon one of the eavesdroppers, whose consequent curses were instant and loud. Other voices of like import, with wonder how it had happened, were mingled with commands from one person for caution and silence. Louis wanted no more to satisfy him that, but for the generous zeal of Wharton, he might now himself have been lying a wounded wretch under the daggers of these men. The ruffian who had been knocked down by the fall of the escutcheon seemed to be much hurt; for, as his companions attempted to raise him, Louis could distinctly hear him utter the most direful imprecations against the Sieur Ignatius, and the devils in league with him. The former commanding voice replied, in a more conciliatory tone, "Come, come, Spitzberg, this is only a little artillery from the owls! Don't mind a graze, man; you shall pinion the gallant, in revenge for these bruises. Before sunrise, we will have him yet."

"I'll pinion him, with a witness!" grumbled the fellow; "and make him confess his heart's blood!"

"Silence, then!" reiterated his commander. The order was almost instantly obeyed; and Louis thinking, after

this injunction, he could learn no more, with a similar caution to that he had observed in advancing, retreated over the gateway, and descended safely into the court.

Though he saw no symptoms of an attack on the house, he did not neglect to make the hall-door perfectly secure, before he took up his candle to return to the kitchen, and dismiss his vigilant attendant to rest. He found the lamp burnt out, and Gerard still fast asleep. A rousing shake of the shoulder, however, soon made him start from his seat; and, when his half-opened eyes perceived the object of his watchfulness standing by his side, he could hardly believe he was not dreaming yet. Louis bid him go to bed, and he would tell him in the morning how he had let himself in. Gerard gaped, and stretched his arms, glared at his young master, and said it was very odd. He had double-locked and bolted the gates; but his Honour was a scholar of the Sieur Ignatius; and so he would rather hear no more about it."

"Well, then, good night!" said Louis, with a smile; "and, since you can explain the matter to your own satisfaction, it is sufficient for me. Only keep true to your professed practice, and be sure that all the doors and windows are locked and barred before you go to rest."

"I saw that before I fell asleep, sir."

"Then who drew the bolts of the door on the terrace?"

"Nobody comes into the house that way," replied Gerard, pouring oil into his lamp.

"I did," returned Louis.

The worthy German looked more astonished at this information, than he had seemed to be when he suspected the learned Secretary had passed through the keyhole by some of the occult arts of Ignatius, who, his wife had long persuaded her credulous husband to believe, was nothing short of a wicked necromancer.

Louis followed the sluggish steps of his attendant to every door that opened from the house; and being satisfied that all were safe, he bade Gerard good night, who mumbled out the same, without casting a thought on the unusual caution of his master. Louis proceeded to the room which contained all the state manuscripts that were

yet under his care; and feeling no sleep in his eyes, or in his wishes, he laid his pistols on the table, and prepared to watch and to meditate until morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

When morning broke, it found the wearied spirit of Louis fast reposing under his closed eyelids. He had arraigned himself and his fair mistress before the bar of his reason, again and again; he fatigued memory in recalling every word he had ever heard her utter, to enable himself to judge how far her former sentiments agreed with her late unqualified declaration on the side of expediency; and, to his consternation, he found that he could recollect no one generous thought from her lips, which had not been the echo of some opinion from his own. She had never led the way in noble sentiment. How different was the case in his conversations with his now far-distant Cornelia and Alice! Sympathy reigned throughout their circle; and it was only to speak first, to have the good fortune to promulgate the thought of every breast.

What, then! had the woman he regarded as perfection's self—had she met only one compulsive occasion of declaring her unbiassed opinion on a subject of principle, and had she proved herself devoid of any? devoted alone to the dominancy of passion, whether it point to the right or to the wrong? To him, who had been brought up at the feet of the Christian instructor of Lindisfarne, it was no excuse that devotedness to love, or zeal in friendship, were her motives for abandoning the rule of human conduct. Such affections were as the hills of Paradise, on which man might repose his grateful heart; but there was a heaven above them; and, when its flaming sword passed between him and his earthly Eden, Louis believed there should be obedience without appeal.

"Oh!" cried he, writhing under the recollections of the last scene at the palace, "had I known too late that such thou art, how should I have withered in those arms!"

As these reflections gradually subsided into sleep, her image kept its station in his dreams; but it was not as heretofore, when his visionary fancy used to portray her smiling in groves of perpetual spring. She now appeared in rugged scenes of affright, accusing him of faithlessness; and, with menacing gestures, stimulating unseen personages to revenge.

He did not awake till the sun had risen far above the horizon; and then he found himself stretched on the floor, with his head pillowed on his arm. The cheerfulness of the busy morning hour shone on all without; while, within, the desolation of loneliness and of discomfort sat, like a troubled spirit, on every gloomy piece of furniture.

"But this is the day, the blissful day," cried he, "when the bewildering spell which has so long enwrapped me will be broken! I shall again mingle in the social meetings of my fellow-creatures, and find myself amongst a variety of persons, to whom I can speak, and rationally companion my mind and my enjoyments. Hitherto, for these three months past, I have gone gliding about, fearful of human glance or friendly cognizance, till my crazed faculties have fancied a guardian angel in a beauteous vapour! But now the mists disperse. Propitious morning, bright and transparent, I greet your opening!—You will unfold to me my father! you will release me from the wild and feverish dream in which my life has wasted, ever since this dreary mansion became the confidant of my thoughts!"

In contemplating such a happy consummation of his most sacred wishes, he passed to his own apartment; where, re-dressing himself, with all his wonted elasticity of spirits he prepared for the coming events of the day. On entering the saloon, he found Gerard placing the breakfast tray. The honest German, with his usual vacant air, drawled out, that Martini was below, with a message from the Sieur.

"Send him to me," returned Louis, anxious to hear of

Ignatius's safe arrival at St. Polten's, and eager to be told any thing that might relate to his father's approach.

Martini obeyed the summons with alacrity. His appearance was full of gaiety, and his dress (which he took pains to display, under a large Hungarian great coat), was of a splendour that instantly attracted the notice of Louis, as much from its novelty as costliness. The Italian's former habit was a russet grey, without ornament or smartness; but this was scarlet, and gorgeously laced with gold.

"Why, Martini," cried Louis, "that is a gala dress; and to honour the ambassador, I suppose. You have left him well, and conducted your noble master safe?"

Martini was at that moment viewing his own figure in one of the large mirrors of the apartment. Louis could have laughed, as he repeated his question to the happy coxcomb.

"I am impatient as yourself, Signor," replied he, "to see the entrance of the ambassador. You will then know that I do not wear this livery without a right."

"I did not suspect it, my good Martini!" returned Louis; "but you do not tell me when his Excellency is to arrive."

"By five in the evening, at the *Palais d'Espagne,* and thither I am to conduct you to await him."

"In a habit as splendid as your own?" asked Louis, with a smiling nod to his laced vest. Martini coloured; and, throwing a proud glance over his embroidery, exclaimed, "Signor, I have been some years with my master; and seniority of services, with some great men, has more consequence than short duties in higher posts."

"I wish it were the rule with all great men!" replied Louis; "and be assured, Martini, I shall always have too much respect for your tried fidelity to your master, ever to wish to rival you in his good graces. But come, answer my twice-demanded question: how did you leave him at Saint Polten?"

"I did not leave him there at all," replied Martini: "he left me last night; and, at parting, gave me a commission to execute a million of orders, ere he should return."

"Then he went alone?" asked Louis, with an alarm he would not show; "or what were his attendants?"

"He might, or he might not, have some of the ambassador's people to meet him on the road; but, on receiving a letter at midnight by Castanos, he called me to his chamber, and after giving me his commands, went away, telling me I should see him no more till we met this evening in the *Palais d'Espagne*."

"And have you heard nothing of him?"

"Nothing."

"But Castanos accompanied him?"

"I do not know. The surly old Spaniard went out before my master, and would not answer me when I spoke to him."

Louis was disturbed at this vague information. The threatening language he had heard last night, and the unseasonable hour of Ignatius's journey, filled him with apprehensions for the event. Unobservant of the troubled countenance which only appeared to listen to him, the volatile Italian continued the conversation, rapturously describing the *Palais d'Espagne*, its costly furniture, the splendid retinue which were placed there to welcome its future lord, and the magnificent entertainment that was preparing for his reception. "Ah!" cried the transported valet, "who will see us there, and believe we could ever have endured, for so many months, the hard vigils of that horrid college!"

"And yet," said Louis, striving to recal his attention from his fears for Ignatius, "it seems to me that college seclusion, and even its austerities, are better calculated to please the taste of your master, than the public bustle, and scenes of luxury, you have just described."

"That may be, Signor," replied Martini; "but times change men, as men change the times; so I make no more manifestoes for my master than for myself."

"But I wish you had taken more care of him!" returned Louis, rising from his seat. "Indeed, Martini, after his having once been assailed, you ought not to have allowed him to set out alone."

"Allowed him!" retorted the Italian, "allowed my master! He has never been *allowed* in his life! He has

always done just as his will impels him: and I know not the man on earth who dare to say to him, *I withhold,* or *I allow!*"

"You mistake me. I did not mean to invest you with a lord's control over the Sieur; but ought you not to have asked his permission to attend him? Ought you not to have entreated him, when you knew, by so recent an experience, that assassins lie in wait for his life?"

"My master commands, and I obey, Signor!" replied Martini; "that is the duty he requires of me, and he would banish me for presumption, should I proffer any other."

"He ought to be a god," returned Louis, "to live in such proud loneliness! But I am too much of a mortal, not to be anxious about his safety; and I request you to let me have the earliest intelligence respecting him."

Martini answered carelessly, "that, as things were, it was impossible to learn any thing until the suite should arrive; but," added he, "at five o'clock I shall have the happiness of conducting you to the *Palais d'Espagne,* where you will see him."

"Be punctual to your hour," replied Louis.

Martini crossed himself, in ratification of his word; and with a step, light as his spirits, danced out of the apartment.

Louis looked after the jocund Italian. Joy, the joy of the heart! is not gay, it is soul-centered; and calls for meditation on its own perfection.

Louis's imagination, kindled by the ardent affection he had ever cherished for his father, was again called forth, to set that image of his idolatry in a halo of the purest lustre. The name of parent seemed to consecrate the adoration of his heart. There could be no excess, he thought, in loving him from whom his being and his honour were derived; and, in the ardour of his enthusiasm, he beseeched the Almighty to bless him with a virtue worthy of such a father.

In hours like these, Louis learned the full value of the pious offices to which the instructions of the Pastor of Lindisfarne had habituated his mind. The heavenly serenity which presided over the temper of the venerable man,

was the best proof of his precepts. "My son," he used to say, "in joy, or grief, let your first counsellor be the Dispenser of both. His gracious Spirit is ready to assuage the dangerous fervors of the one, by the dewy incense of a grateful heart; and he will cheer the shadows of the other, by the guiding light of faith and hope."

Louis did not permit the contemplation of future high duties to interfere with the performance of present ones, however lowly. He gathered the papers in his writing-room, and confided them to an obscure closet in a remote part of the château; where, he believed, they would be secure from either curiosity or depredation, till he should be commissioned to transfer them to some other custody.

As the time drew nigh for the promised summons to the *Palais d'Espagne*, his watch was drawn out again and again. But when minutes only intervened between his wishes and the eventful hour, he held it in his hand, and paced the room with a beating heart. He heard a step in the gallery. He flew to the door — it was Martini.

"Is he arrived?" cried Louis, rushing towards him.

"No," replied the Italian. "But haste! — I expect the cavalcade every moment, and your carriage is at the gate."

Louis seemed to have made but one step from the hall to the carriage. He was seated in it, and leaning breathless against the back, when Martini jumped in by his side. The lively valet discoursed with his usual fluency; but what he said his auditor did not know: he had no outward perception, all was absorbed within. The vehicle stopped; he thought the horses must have flown, when Martini exclaimed, "We are at the *Palais d'Espagne.*"

Louis aroused himself, and looked around. He was in the court-yard of a superb mansion, thronged with a crowd of liveried attendants, walking to and fro under the colonnades and portico. The spacious doors of the house stood open. Louis sprang from the carriage, and, without noticing the men, who bowed as he passed, hurried through the great vestibule. Martini preceded him up the lofty staircase, to a range of gorgeous apartments. The first and second were full of Spanish merchants, resident at Vienna, eagerly awaiting the entrance of an ambassador,

who had obtained the restitution of all the privileges which had been wrested from them when the Austrian family lost the crown of Spain. The next chamber was a saloon of imperial magnificence.

"Here, Signor," said the Italian, "you must attend the commands of the Duke de Ripperda." And, without another word, he bowed slightly, and hastened away.

Louis's feelings were wound up to torture, during the short interval between that moment, and the one in which his expecting ear caught the trampling of horses, and the buzz of an approaching crowd. He rushed to the window, and beheld a train of travelling carriages filled with the suite of the embassy, sweeping by the great gates of the mansion, while the court-yard was filled by the populace, and an immense cavalcade in splendid Spanish uniforms. Immediately following the latter, appeared six horses, richly caparisoned, and drawing a carriage surmounted with the ducal coronet. Louis saw no more. That carriage contained his father! He started from the window. The air resounded with shouts.

He pressed his clasped hands on his bursting heart.

A few minutes more, and Martini darted into the outer room where the merchants waited. The door was open; and Louis heard him say, "The ambassador!" The next instant he beheld a man, of such resplendent aspect—a step, a form, an air, a princely dignity, as he bent his gracious head, waving with white plumes, to the grateful Spaniards who thronged around him—that Louis felt at once it was his father! His feet were riveted to the spot on which he stood; his eyes, on that august figure; but it was with the dazzled gaze of eager, expecting joy.

The crowd separated from before their benefactor, and he entered the saloon. As he advanced into the room, the door was closed behind him; and, while the unshorn star of prosperity seemed fixed in his magnificent countenance, he made a hasty step forward, and extended his arms to his son.

With a cry of joy, in which nothing was articulate but —"My father!" Louis precipitated himself towards him, and fell upon his breast. The Duke strained him to his

bosom: but that overwrought heart had ceased to beat; and, with a moistened cheek, he pressed the insensible lips of his too happy son.

CHAPTER XXII.

Louis re-opened his eyes on a superb couch, in a magnificent bedchamber, and surrounded by the physicians who had accompanied the suite of his father from Madrid. A few minutes more restored to him the possession of all his faculties; and looking around, he did not seek in vain for the noble form, whose parental embrace was yet warm on his heart. Seeing that his son was recovered, the Duke made a sign for every person to leave the room. Louis was going to rise, but his father checked him by a motion of the hand; and drawing near, sat down by his side.

They were now alone. The Duke had taken his hand, —Louis kissed it reverentially. "Ah, my father!" cried he, "if words could utter all that is in my soul, towards your honoured self! Revered, — sacred —" Tears bathed the hand, which he sealed again with his devoted lips.

"Louis," said the Duke. Louis started, and looked around, — and then turned to his father. Ripperda silently regarded the enquiring movements of his son.

"Sir," said Louis, "did I not hear the Sieur Ignatius speak to me?"

"You heard the voice of your father," returned the Duke, and he smiled. It was the smile which Louis had never beheld on other mouth but one! He gazed on his father's face with searching amazement. Ripperda still wore his plumed hat. He took it off, to submit himself the more completely to the inspection of his son. Louis felt that the voice and smile were those of the dark-visaged and reserved Ignatius; but the face on which he now looked was refulgent with manly beauty, and the undis-

guised consciousness of high desert. Though the resemblance was so extraordinary in two respects, yet, as in every other point the dissimilarity was as striking, Louis had no suspicion of the truth; and, concluding that the Jesuit was some illustrious Spanish branch of the Ripperda family, he earnestly replied, — "but where is the Sieur? Your voice, my father, is so exactly his; I guess I must revere him as a near relation, as well as your steadfast friend! But where is he? For many reasons, I am anxious to know that he is safe."

"He is safe," returned the Duke; "and it gives me no small satisfaction that you have been obliged to ask that question of me."

"Oh, sir," replied his son, "though I might not always conduct myself in the manner the Sieur Ignatius would approve; yet, I had hoped you could not doubt that I would eventually give him all my reverence."

"I did not refer to that," resumed the Duke; "but, as you had suspicions respecting the real situation and authority of that man, and did not misconceive the character of your father; — when, through all the long months in which you obeyed commands, that would not suffer an appeal; and you so often doubted that the Baron de Ripperda could really submit his son to such uncontrollable delegated power; — how did it happen that you never suspected the mysterious Ignatius, and your father, to be one and the same person?"

"How!" exclaimed Louis, hardly conscious that he had spoken, while, in hesitating astonishment, his eye hastily scanned the august form before him. It was indeed, like that of Ignatius, majestic in every proportion, but with more meridian vigour, with a more gracious air of command. No trace of age discomposed the lofty symmetry of his figure; no mark of time was visible on his capacious brow; cleared from the darkening dye, with which he had stained his complexion and his hair, his eyes shone bright as the heavens, which their hue resembled. On the side of his forehead, under the hair, Louis could discern the scar which had been inflicted under the portico of the Jesuits' College. He shuddered at what might

have been the issue of that stroke; and thought what would have been his agony, had he known that it was his father's hand which closed so deathfully upon his, in the dark chamber of murder. He could not speak; but his eyes, and quivering lip, told all that was passing in his mind.

"It was necessary," resumed the Duke, "that the negotiation with Austria should be managed with despatch and secrecy. The Queen proposed that I should undertake it in disguise. I left Madrid under an ostensible rumour that I was gone to Russia, on an affair connected with the Baltic trade. At the time of usual embarkation, I dismissed all my attendants, excepting Castanos and Martini. They were essential to my proceedings. In the same day, I assumed the habit of a Jesuit; and, with my credentials disposed about my person, made my way to Vienna. Besides the persons I have named, the Empress Elizabeth alone was privy to my disguise. Her confidence in me inspired the idea of the negotiation; and her own interest in some of its articles warranted my faith in her secrecy: — our success you know. But, while I was effecting these great objects for my country, I chose the opportunity, to give my son his first lesson in the science, to which fate has destined him. Louis, I am fully satisfied with all you then performed. But, you have yet much to learn, and more to practise. You are now to be plunged into the world, to stem the eddies of two contending vortices, duty and pleasure! Mark me, and write on your heart what I am going to say. Use the one, to serve the other! But let me see that your choice will be that of Hercules. You will meet many to persuade you to the contrary; but remember, you may have a prompt guide in him who has most interest in your welfare; therefore, Louis, I ask your fearless confidence."

While Ripperda continued to speak, his son thought within himself, "If my father's lineaments were disguised in the sombre vestments of the Jesuit, his spirit was under a darker mask: — I cannot recognise the harsh and despotic Ignatius, in the mild exhortations of this gracious parent!"

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed he, throwing himself on the Duke's bosom, "you have your son's heart! — and in that, where is the thought that can be hidden from you?"

Ripperda smiled. "Louis," said he, "these impassioned emotions may be convincing witnesses of your southern origin! — but, imitate your father. You must temper your Spanish blood with some phlegm of the country in which you received your education. With one half of mankind, this sort of feeling would be ridiculed, because not understood: while those who could comprehend it, would watch it as the betrayer of your secrets, and manage it to the establishment of their own. The heart is man's citadel; it is only open country with feeble woman! And, perhaps, there is too much of her nature in all vehement expressions of sensibility!"

Louis felt checked at heart. "Sir," said he, "I dared to show these sensibilities to my father, because I trusted he knew I was not wanting in the mental strength to prove myself a man."

"True, Louis; but that is a character which ought not to require occasional proofs. It should be manifest in an unvarying equability of conduct."

Louis looked on his father.

"One of my books is the human countenance," resumed the Duke; "and yours is very legible at present. I do not require you to change your constitution, but to control its impulses. Endearments are rejected between man and man, because they admit hypocrisy. All can affect to caress; but the sober aspect of real fidelity is not easily assumed. In temperate discourse, you look into your companion's eyes. But when the heart shows itself by agitated nerves, and the head is thrown on the bosom, how can you then find an avenue to the soul? Man, therefore, demands of man the open, unreserved countenance; and leaves to woman that caressing enthusiasm, which may express tenderness, veil modesty, or mask a deceptious heart. Hence, my son, we are oftener deceived in love than in friendship; but you must beware of both."

Louis felt a pang at the concluding remark. Quelling, however, every appearance of disturbance, and only return-

ing the kind pressure of his father's hand, with more emphasis than he intended, he exclaimed, "In all things, honoured sir, I will strive to be obedient to your counsels. But do not despise the expressions of an affection, which would not know a dearer object than yourself!"

"I do not despise, but I would restrain them; you must be habituated to self-command. Cherish the confidence you have declared. Let me be, indeed, the repository of all your thoughts; and though, in some cases, I may disapprove, you shall never have cause to remember the Sieur Ignatius in your father."

The smile which had so often lightened from the dark lip of the Sieur, now beamed in sun-like radiance over the bright countenance of Ripperda. Louis could have thrown himself again into his arms; but he remembered the lesson he had received, and merely clasped the hand he held to his grateful lips.

Ripperda passed the remainder of the time, in which he sat with his son, in giving him instructions relative to their present situation at Vienna. He told him that, in right of his restored rank, he was now Marquis de Montemar; and that their Majesties of Spain had appointed him Secretary of Legation to the present embassy.

"You are young for so responsible an office," continued he; "but the Queen knows how ably you fulfilled my duties, during my wounds; and herself suggested to the King, rewarding your zeal by so answerable an appointment. The courts of both countries are ignorant of this reason; therefore, you must make up in dignity of deportment what you want in years, and, to common eyes, in previous service. The world is governed by appearance."

Ripperda then spoke on the causes and terms of his reunion with Spain. And with some astonishment, and more regret, Louis comprehended that his father had also been received into the pale of its established church. Louis ventured to express his sentiments on this communication.

"It was my original religion," returned the Duke; "the free-thinking spirit of independence had betrayed me in youth to the cavils of Reformation, but time and study reconciled me to the faith of my ancestors. Two

learned Jesuits at Madrid completed the work; and I am now as good a Catholic as any in the Spanish dominions. The same masters may convert my son; and then, Louis, I shall have no wish ungratified."

"I was born a Protestant, sir," replied Louis; "and I believe I shall die one."

"Be what your conscience dictates," returned the Duke; "only remember that your father and your King are Catholics; and you will not fail in honour to their church."

Louis bowed his head in respectful acquiescence. The Duke soon after withdrew to his chamber of audience. Many of the old Spanish settlers in Austria, who had been appressed there since the changed succession in Spain, were in waiting, to petition the ambassador of their ancient country to interfere with the Imperial court in their behalf.

Titles were never points, in the ambition of Louis, but as symbols of pre-eminence in nobler respects; he, therefore, was not insensible to the satisfaction of having the alienated honours of his race restored to him, by the virtues of his father. Such were his thoughts when the subject occurred to him; but when the Duke de Ripperda first left the room, the mind of his son was wholly absorbed in the happiness of having at last seen, and conversed with, and been received to the heart of such a parent. That the stern Ignatius, from whom he had shrunk while he revered him, and this benignant parent were one, amazed,—while it called forth all his gratitude to Heaven, for the preservation of that parent through the perils of his disguise.

As he meditated on the complete change which had taken place in his father, since he had dismissed the garb of the Jesuit; and recollected the lessons he had received from him in both characters;—from the one, on the policy of assuming the thing that is not; and from the other, the recent injunction to conceal his real feelings;—he conceived a hope that the Duke de Ripperda might not be so averse to the Duke of Wharton, as the Sieur Ignatius had thought it expedient to represent. In his next discourse with his father, he determined to name the Duke; for, in spite of the late reproof to his indulged sensibility, his heart yearned to utter all its affection and gratitude to the friend, who

and rewarded his repeated apparent insulting avoidance, by twice having been his preserver.

After the Duke de Ripperda dismissed his Spanish suppliants, he repaired to a private council of the Austrian ministers, to discuss the preliminaries to his public reception by their Cæsarean Majesties. Louis did not leave his apartments till he heard the wheels of his father's carriage in the court-yard. It was then near ten o'clock at night, and the colonnades and palaces were lit up in every direction.

He hastened towards the great saloon, and met the Duke in the ante-room. They entered together. Several persons were present, who greeted Ripperda with an equal air of deference, though with different degrees of ceremonial obeisance. Their personal ranks were distinctly marked in each individual's demeanour; and when the Duke introduced Louis as his son, they paid him compliments, which the young Marquis answered with little more than respectful bows. His father immediately led the way to the supper-room; and Louis, with the rest of the company, followed through a suite of superb chambers, lined with attendants.

The entertainment was served in a style to the Duke no more than customary, but altogether novel to his son. The simple elegance of his Pastor-uncle's table possessed every comfort; the hospitable board at Athelstone and Bamborough groaned with the weight of the feast; and the feudal state he had seen at the banquets of the chiefs of Scotland, was that of plenty, with something too much of bacchanalian festivity: — but here all that was elegant and hospitable, stately and grand, were united in one assemblage of courtly magnificence.

The manners of Ripperda to his company were like his entertainment. None could forget that he was the first man at table; but the condescending graces of his conversation, and a peculiar address, to which only the individual to whom it was pointed could be conscious, charmed all that were present, with a conviction that each one in particular was his especial favourite.

Louis's spirits were so absorbed in attention to his fa-

ther's eloquent and general discourse, on a variety of subjects, that he spoke very little; and thought the time had flown, when the Duke rose from his chair, and the party, obeying the signal, bade him adieu for the night. When Louis was preparing to follow, his father stopped him.

"I am pleased with your general deportment this evening," said he. "The dignified respect with which you treated those persons, (who, though holding subordinate situations to yourself in the embassy, are your seniors in years, and all of them men of family,) while it maintains your own superiority, will conciliate their good will, and propitiate the envy that might busy itself in search of your faults."

"Sir," said Louis, shocked at the implied arrogance, "I had no idea of showing any thing to those gentlemen but simple respect."

Ripperda shook his head, but not with gravity.

"I know you are a man of nice distinctions; and that, on the meaning of some terms, you and I have yet to agree. But I will trust your humility in some respects, to your haughtiness in others."

"My father!" exclaimed Louis. The Duke smiled.

"Ignatius might help us on this subject!" said he; "but I wish to speak with you about another order of persons. To-morrow you will be introduced to young men of the highest rank in Spain, the sons of Spanish grandees of the first order. Wishing to see Vienna, they are nominally attached to this embassy; and though residing where they please, have places every day at my table. These you must treat with the suavity of equality and confidence; but beware of really giving them your trust. They are your future rivals with your sovereign. At present their pursuit is pleasure. And, while you steadily keep your eye upon the one aim of your life — honourable distinction! — to these young men you must appear as inclinable to folly as themselves."

Louis's bright eye turned on his father.

"It is even so!" continued the Duke; "you must lull the circumventing watchfulness of their ambitious fathers, by seeming to share the dissipation of their sons. Me they

dare not touch. But were you to appear all that I trust you are, or will be, roused jealousy would seize the accessible point; and, through you, the Spanish lords would seek to undermine the new superstructure, they see I am raising, to the glory of the house of Ripperda. Seem, therefore, careless of advancement, eager for pleasure; and they may quietly submit to the early growth of honours, which, they believe, increasing folly will render the last. Use caution now, and the time is not far distant when you may show yourself, in these respects, according to the sentiments that direct your present questioning looks; — if, indeed, such sentiments will then be yours."

Louis's face glowed with his heart: — "My father," cried he, "those sentiments were the principles of my Pastor-uncle; and they are woven with my being."

"'Tis well," answered the Duke; "they are going through an ordeal. You must prepare yourself for trials of a different nature from those you found so galling at the Château de Phaffenberg. There, you had only to endure; here, you are called upon to endure and to resist: — to endure, nay, to court temptation; and to resist and overcome it. You must be in the midst of every pleasure that can seduce or intoxicate the senses of man; and you must see, and taste all, without allowing yourself to feel its enjoyment. To derive enjoyment is to yield independence; and you must be independent of every thing, beyond yourself."

Ripperda's voice sounded to his son like that of a trumpet. He loved to feel his strength; to struggle, and to conquer, though the war might only be in his own bosom. He listened, and longed for an opportunity of proving to his father, that, whatever might be his son's sensibilities, he had no effeminacy in his soul. The Duke continued.

"Your father does all that, to which he exhorts you. He draws every one to his purpose, without permitting any one to fix a link on him. From the age of twenty-one I have been master of myself; and, from that circumstance, master of every human being, on whom I turned my eye to do me service. From being the son of a banished man, and alienated from the land and honours of

my race, I became a soldier, a statesman, a counsellor of nations! The country, which had exiled my father, solicited the return of his son! And now, the progress of my undeviating career has brought me to the restoration of all the rights of my name; has raised it to a reputation, only bounded by the limits of the civilised world! Louis, what I am, you must be."

During this speech, Louis, more than once, saw the proud and lightning glance of the Sieur Ignatius. He felt an answering triumph; for the throes of an eager emulation were busy in his youthful heart. Unconsciously, his countenance reflected all his father's; for then, perhaps, there was not a sentiment within him that was not absorbed in the single blaze of ambition. The Duke rose, speaking his last sentence; and with so undefinable an air of even fearful grandeur, that, for a moment, he seemed transformed a third time before his son. But the next instant, turning from the door to which he had advanced, the awful splendours of his countenance were again softened into the gracious light of general complacency; in his usual tone, he bade Louis be ready, at a certain hour on the morrow, to accompany his official presentation to the Emperor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE suite of apartments, in the *Palais d'Espagne*, allotted to Louis, were spacious and superb; and the train of attendants and equipages assigned to his service, were as sumptuously appointed, as if for the ambassador himself. The Duke had informed him that all these were as absolutely at his command, as if he inhabited a separate dwelling. He was to consider himself at perfect liberty; to appear at the ambassador's table, only when his inclination suited; to form what acquaintance he pleased; to go where he liked;—in short, his father resigned all control over his

time or his actions, excepting the hours which must be dedicated to diplomatic duties; and any proceedings which might eventually impede the grand objects of his life.

In the course of conversation, Louis had petitioned his father to take off the interdict which prohibited his correspondence with his friends in England. The cause for silence existing no longer, the favour was readily granted, but guarded with one condition; that he must not write of Ignatius in any other character than that of a Jesuit. That he was Ripperda's self, must ever be preserved a profound secret. The Emperor was jealous of female interference, besides being suspicious of the affections of his wife; and the most vexatious consequences might be expected, should he discover that the Empress had been an agent in the late negotiation. This, he would more than suspect, were he to be told that Ripperda had been *incognito* at Vienna: for the Imperial Charles was not ignorant of the influence that accomplished statesman had gained over the youthful mind of Elizabeth, at her father's court; and that he had even exercised it to persuade her to accept the distinction offered her, as consort to the Emperor of Germany. Early influences are generally lasting ones; and though Charles had not sufficient sensibility to have felt this in his own person, he had sagacity enough to have guessed it in that of his wife, had he received a single hint of but one clandestine meeting between her and Ripperda, before that statesman made his public appearance at the Austrian Court.

Louis readily engaged for circumspection; aware that his correspondence with the friends of his youth, would be on subjects dearest to them; purely egotistical: — while himself was anxious to know how far the general comfort of the family had been restored by his application to Don Ferdinand.

Before he could lay his head (which was all awake with life and happiness) upon his pillow, he sat down to pour out his full heart to the venerable confidant of his earliest wishes, to the unerring guardian of his impassioned soul. As he wrote, the fierce flames of the wild ambition, which, an hour before, had rushed through his veins with a proud

disdain of every obstacle, gradually subsided under the gentle ascendancy of the meek spirit with which he now conversed. The mild precepts of his benign instructor seemed again to whisper in his ear: — "Fly temptation. But when it pursues, or meets you, arm against it in the panoply of faith and virtue, and be not overcome. If you sink in a contest you did not seek, you may be pitied and forgiven. If you fall in a conflict you provoked, men will deride, and God condemn you!"

Louis shuddered at his late presumptuous impulse; and, blessing the pious cares which could influence his mind, even at so wide a distance of place and time, he continued to write. With what a reposing, smiling rapture at his heart, did he bend over the sheet on which he was now permitted to transmit all the feelings of that heart, to the most indulgent, as well as wisest of friends!

A few words at the beginning had explained his silence, by acknowledging (without particularising circumstances) the mysterious nature of the affairs in which he had been engaged: — and then followed all the affection of a son; all the frank communications, where secrecy did not bind him, that would be grateful to the venerable man. But there was one subject he did not dare to touch on: — whenever it rose before him, he turned away, as from a lovely but a condemned spirit. His heart thrilled and trembled; and, pressing it, he exclaimed — "I need not seek a contest!"

When he had closed this long epistle, with entreaties for frequent communications from the dear inhabitants of the Pastorage, whether they were at Morewick or in Lindisfarne; he addressed a letter to Sir Anthony, as full of duty, as of descriptions and remarks calculated for his entertainment: and then, retiring to his pillow, found, what he did not expect, an immediate and sound sleep.

The morning brought Martini into his apartment. He came with a note from Ripperda, informing his son, that the Emperor would receive the embassy at noon: he must therefore be in the saloon, habited in the Spanish mode, and according to his rank, half an hour before the

time of going to the Imperial palace. Louis was finishing his packet for England, when the confidential valet presented his message. He read the letter, and wrote his reply of obedience. Martini took the answer, with a bow of profound respect; but it had nothing of the obsequious homage which degrades the person who pays it, without honouring him on whom it is bestowed.

"Your Excellency will pardon, I trust," said he, "my former omissions of due reverence to the son of my master! I was ignorant, until now, that I attended other than the Chevalier de Phaffenberg; and, according to the commands of the Duke, I was to consider him as no more than his secretary, and the poor *cadet* of a ruined house. But it was a noble one: and I trust, my lord, that though I might fail in honour to the Duke de Ripperda's son, you will not accuse me of insolence to the Chevalier de Phaffenberg."

"Worthy Martini!" cried Louis, rising from his seat, and shaking the hand of the valet with true English warmth, "I have nothing to complain of from you. I honour your fidelity to your master, and your regard for the fallen in fortune. I am proud to claim equality with such sentiments! From this hour consider me as your friend."

Martini, with the ardour of his country, threw himself on his knees, and fervently kissed the hand that pressed his; then, hastily rising, with glistening eyes, and his hands clasped on his breast, he bowed, and hastened from the apartment.

This little incident particularly pleased Louis. He had found a simple and a generous feeling, in the confidential servant of a statesman; while all else, above, around, in that transforming sphere, seemed devoted to selfishness, or to artifice, of however refined a fabric. Musing on this, he submitted himself, without discussion, to be habited according to the fashion of his new country.

For Ripperda himself, when his son met him in the saloon, he was one bright effulgence of princely honours. His sword, his belt, his gartered knees; and all the jewelled insignia of Spanish chivalry, glittered on his person.

The diamond coronet of his ancestors encircled his cap, surmounted by the crest of his family, — a golden eagle, under a plume of snow-white feathers. They waved before the bird of Jove, like fleecy clouds in the face of the sun. But, gorgeous as were these ornaments, their brilliancy was as nothing when compared with the countenance they were placed to adorn: the brightness of a high soul was there, that seemed rather to suffer the decorations of rank than to require them.

The Duke was surrounded by the young Spanish grandees, in the habits of their quality, but varied in colour and decoration, according to the caprice of the wearer; while the real officers of the embassy were all arrayed in one sumptuous uniform.

Ripperda presented his son to the nobles. Most of them, though young men, were Louis's seniors; but they saluted him with that respect which is usual, in despotic governments, to persons holding powerful stations under the sovereign. The intimation his father had given him of their pursuits did not incline him in their favour; and with, perhaps, too lofty an air of cold politeness, he met their first advances to social acquaintance. Some of them mistook this dignity of principle (which acted without intention) for the insolence of inflated vanity; and they who thought so, eyed him with resentment. Others conceived it to be mere reserve of disposition: — for none could derive it from awkward shyness in a new situation. Every thing that Louis said or did was with a grace peculiar to himself; an ease, that spoke the high-born man, and a mind, conscious that no adventitious circumstance can really add to the consequence of him who builds his character on virtue.

The King and Queen of Spain had issued orders, that no expense should be spared, to give their ambassador every dignity in the eyes of the Imperial Court; and the equipages and retinue which composed the suite of Ripperda, struck the inhabitants of Vienna with amazement: as nothing had equalled the pomp of this, his public entrance, since the coronation of the Emperor.

The audience chamber was crowded; and the foreign

ambassadors were there, to mark the reception of the Spanish plenipotentiary. Charles received him with testimonies of respect he had never bestowed on any other ambassador; and which filled those present with apprehensions of what those secret articles might be, which thus humbled the Emperor of Germany before the minister of his former rival. Louis, and the Spanish noblemen, were presented by Ripperda. Charles said a few words of ceremony to the young grandees, but signalised the son of the ambassador by his particular notice; and in a lowered voice, that none else might hear, complimented him on the talents he had shown for negotiation during the illness of the Sieur Ignatius.

At the meeting of the council, the preceding evening, Ripperda had intimated to the Chancellor Sinzendorff, that the Chevalier de Phaffenberg (whom the Chancellor had taken occasion to praise) was his son; and in the morning, Sinzendorff had explained the circumstance to the Emperor, remarking, at the same time, on the genius and straight-forward integrity of the young politician.

When his Majesty turned to withdraw, he told the Spanish ambassador that the Chancellor would conduct him to the Empress, who was in readiness to receive the letter and picture he brought from the Prince of Spain to the Archduchess, her daughter.

As soon as the Emperor had quitted the chamber, Ripperda and his suite followed Count Sinzendorff towards the grand saloon. As Louis turned to obey, his heart anticipated the emotions he should feel, in again seeing Otteline; in again meeting the persuading looks of her gracious mistress and confidant. But how different did the Imperial Elizabeth appear in her court, to the benignant Princess, who was all ease and smiles in the *boudoir* of her beautiful favourite! She sat, coldly regal, with the Austrian ladies of rank standing behind, and on each side of her.

When the Duke de Ripperda approached the imperial chair, Louis observed the reserved majesty of Elizabeth's countenance dilate into an expression of proud exultation; it haughtily swept the circle, while she stretched out her

hand to the Spanish Ambassador, as, bending on his knee, he presented the royal packet. She half rose to receive it; and then her lips and eyes beamed all the graciousness upon his father, which Louis had so often felt shining on himself. But there was a glowing flush on her cheek, and a something softer in her eye, when the Duke pressed the hand to his lips, which she had given for the salute of ceremony. Louis then saw, it was the friend, and not the minister, that Elizabeth of Brunswick welcomed from her Imperial throne; and, at the same time, he could not but notice, that the position of his father rather spoke the air of a prince at the feet of beauty, than the prostration of a subject to exalted power.

"It is the mind alone," thought Louis, "that debases actions, or ennobles them! One man would crouch and cringe like a slave, while this bends his knee, like Alexander before Statira!"

Had Louis pursued his observation, he would have understood, that it was the dignity, and peculiarity of this homage, which made it so estimable in the eyes even of an Empress.

When the Duke presented his son, and the Spanish nobles, Louis cast down his eyes; which, indeed, had never wandered from his father and herself: so fearful was he of encountering that face, whose resistless charms were only too apparent to his imagination. What the condescending Elizabeth said to him, he knew not, neither was he conscious how he had gone through the ceremony of presentation, till he felt her ivory fingers gently press his hand, in silent congratulation of what she supposed was then busy in his heart. He dreaded the purport of this unuttered language; and with a tremor pervading his whole body, he rose from his knee, and falling back into the Spanish group, tried to recover self-possession.

Elizabeth continued for some time in conversation with Ripperda; and then giving her hand, according to usage, to the Chancellor to lead her out; as she passed near where Louis stood, she descried him, and spoke to her conductor. He immediately called to the Marquis de Montemar, to attend her Majesty's commands. Louis obeyed in renewed

disorder; and, with a gracious smile, she gently whispered, "You attend the Duke de Ripperda, this evening, to the *Favorita*. It is the Dowager Empress's name-day; and you will see friends and foes. The Duke has received my permission to bring the young Spaniards to be presented to my daughter."

Louis bowed; and her Majesty, with her own fair hand, gathering her robe from the pages who held it, disappeared by a small door into the private apartments.

When he looked round, to rejoin his father, he saw him discoursing with the circle of ladies who stood nearest the throne. Ripperda had already introduced his young grandees to the group; but, on some of the ladies naming his son, he beckoned Louis, who immediately approached, and was presented also. His rapid glance soon convinced him, the looks he feared were not present; and relieved by this certainty, the effect was instantly apparent. The anxiety which so lately had embarrassed his words and actions, disappeared; and, restored to ease, he replied with his usual ingenuous politeness, to the courtesy of the ladies who welcomed him to the court of Vienna. The Duke soon after took his leave of the fair assembly; and, followed by the young Spaniards, and his son, returned to his carriage; —and through the gazing streets, back to the *Palais d'Espagne*.

It was the vernal month of May, and nature appeared in her robes of youth and laughing beauty. The tender azure of the sky was tinged with blushing radiance; while the soft green earth lay in enamelled smoothness, under the umbrageous canopy of trees and shrubs. The air was all balm, diffusing odours from blossoms, flowers, and southern zephyrs laden with the warm breathing of the reposing sun.

As the carriage, which contained Louis, drove along the thronged *Prato*, towards the palace of *la Favorita*, he descried the distant turrets of the Château de Phaffenberg. They stood gloomy and desolate; and he passed them by, like one awakened from the dead, looking aside on what had been his tomb. The Danube was now rolling its majestic flood, broad as a lake, around the island of the palace.

The company crossed to it in gay boats, borne along with silken sails, or rowed by silver oars; and when they stepped on shore, they found the whole a scene of fairy-land.

In the midst of a verdant lawn, round which the beauty and fragrance of all the seasons were collected, on a richly carpeted platform, sat the Dowager Empress. Most of the Imperial family, excepting the Emperor and the Empress, were seated near her. Many of the court were also there; and, in the brilliant circle, Louis recognised the Duke of Wharton, standing behind the chair of the Electress of Bavaria. The eye of Wharton seemed to wander carelessly over the advancing party, without distinguishing any particular object. But the buzz that announced the Duke de Ripperda, attracted the notice of the Electress. Her curiosity was excited, to see this formidable minister, whose influence had induced his royal master to overthrow her dearest schemes, by affixing the guarantee of Spain to the pragmatic sanction. She looked at his commanding figure, with lightning in her eyes; and, as Ripperda approached, to pay his respects to the Dowager Empress, she whispered in the bending ear of Wharton. The next instant her rapid glance caught the face of Louis, and fixed there. Again she whispered Wharton. What she said, and what the answer, was completely between themselves; all passed in so low a voice: but Louis heard the Duke laugh in his reply, as, without looking up from his folded arms, he leaned on her Highness's chair.

Had Louis distinguished what was said, he would have learned, that the Electress recognised him immediately; and, with astonishment, pointed him out to the English Duke; when she heard the young de Phaffenberg of the Altheim apartments, presented to her illustrious grandmother, as the son of Ripperda!

"Could your Highness believe it possible," replied Wharton, "that the fair Otteline would cast her tendrils round a fallen pillar?"

The Electress did not withdraw her persevering gaze, though she ceased her whispers; for the Emperor and Empress approached from the house. The Duke de Ripperda was instantly engaged with the Imperial pair; and soon

after, Charles putting his arm through his, turned with him to the opposite side of the lawn. As Elizabeth was passing Louis, to give her hand to the Dowager Empress, who wished to view the scene from the palace windows, she desired him to offer his arm to the venerable Princess. He hastened to bear his share in supporting the infirm footsteps of old age; a duty, which, to all ranks, was sacred with him; and during the walk, as the aged Empress was deaf, Elizabeth informed him, that the Archduchess Maria Theresa, being suddenly indisposed, detained the Countess Altheim from the present gala. "But," added the gracious speaker, "hope is the lover's comforter!"

She thought it was the ruby light of that hope which now passed over the cheek of Louis. She smiled as she placed the Empress in her chair, and dismissed him to the lawn. Trying to shake from his burning complexion the evidence of his weakness, with a swift step he turned towards the platform, the scene of gaiety. Wharton stood there, though the Electress had moved into the more general circle of the company. The Duke was talking with two or three persons, amongst whom was the Count Leopold Koninseg, a colonel in the Austrian service, and the nephew of the Princess de Waradin; a Hungarian lady, to whom Ripperda had presented his son, in the morning, at the drawing-room. As Louis was hastening to the group that contained his friend and his new acquaintance, the Princess de Waradin, leading a blooming girl of fifteen by the hand, interrupted him. The noble matron asked him if he had yet engaged himself for the dance. On his answering in the negative, she presented him to her daughter, with the compliment, "that there was no person with whom she should be so satisfied to see her Amelia make her first public appearance at court, as the son of the Duke de Ripperda."

Louis made a suitable answer to this politeness, and the pretty Hungarian received his bow with a smile. Other ladies, to whom also his father had introduced him in the morning, now drew around the graceful De Montemar. Invitations to various assemblies were given to him by a

multitude of rosy lips; and, for half an hour before the dancing began, he was enchained in the fair circle; not ungrateful for the flattering distinction, but longing for the moment of release, when he might give one heartfelt pressure to the hand of the friend who had twice saved him from his father's enemies. He often turned his face from the loquacious dames, to seek a glance from his kind preserver; but though Wharton looked hither and thither, in talking with the passing groups, a perverse fatality seemed to prevent his eyes ever falling where Louis stood. Impatience increased with disappointment; and, almost ready to break from the throng that detained him, he gladly heard the music sound from an orchestra, near the arcades of the palace; and immediately a chamberlain approached, to summon the dancers to the soft green before the imperial windows. The fair Amelia extended her hand to her partner, who took it with redoubled pleasure, on seeing, by the direction in which the company turned to the rural ball-room, that he must pass close to the spot where Wharton stood.

As the gay procession moved on, the Duke turned carelessly on his heel, which withdrew him a little from the path, but not so far off, but that Louis heard Leopold Koninseg ask him whether he knew the Marquis de Montemar.

"Who is he?" negligently replied the Duke.

"The Spanish ambassador's son," replied Koninseg: "shall I introduce him?"

"No," returned Wharton; "he seems very well engaged; and I am not ambitious of the acquaintance."

Louis was startled at these words; but recollecting the Duke's situation with the Bavarian faction, and the risks he had already run, between its revenge and his friend's safety, he soon comprehended that prudence had suggested this apparent difference.

The dance began; and, in its exhilarating maze, of motion, music, and sparkling beauty, Louis found all that buoyancy of spirits return, with which he used to animate the smaller, but not less festive, circles of his native land. The peculiar grace of his movements attracted admiration,

in a country where the graces of dancing are a science; and the Electress again turning to Wharton (who had accompanied her to the flowery lists of the waltzers), desired him to observe the extraordinary elegance of the Anglo-Spaniard. "So ethereal!" exclaimed her Highness; "all lightness and grace, and yet so unaffected!" Wharton saw that several of the young grandees were standing near; and he marked one of them cast a disdainful glance on the Electress when she made the observation. Princess de Waradin was also a spectatress; and, while her eye complacently followed the airy flight of her daughter on the sustaining arm of Louis, she took up the Electress's note, and replied, "There is not so elegant a dancer in the circle as the Marquis de Montemar!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. "A well-made man cannot be awkward, if he would!"

"*Ergo!* the Duke of Wharton," rejoined the Electress, smiling.

"Precisely so," returned he, with a gay bow.

She again smiled, and whispered him. The only words audible were, "You must get him amongst us!"

"Give me Actæon's fate, when I do!"

During this scene, Wharton did not require an interpreter to the thickening clouds on the brow of the young Spaniard. At the close of it he muttered something to his companions; their looks suddenly reflected his, and they all turned abruptly and haughtily from the ring.

The Electress drew closer to the garlands which composed it; and ordering a chair, sat down, and conversed at her ease with the group around. Louis's eyes often glanced towards the animated Duke. But his favour with her Highness was too visible, to allow surprise that he did not give attention to any one else. Indeed, he appeared as careless of remark, as he seemed pleased with his situation; and hovered near her with the familiarity of perfect confidence. Her circle of ladies courted his smiles, as the guarantee of hers; and he trifled and talked with them all as his humour dictated. But, in the midst of this gallant badinage, the men regarded him as something more than the gay *Cicisbeo*, who had fol-

lowed the illustrious mourner from her widowed pilgrimage through Italy. They were aware of his political genius; that the lap of beauty could not lull it to repose: and, with less surprise than wonder, they contemplated certain changes in the mutual relations of states, which they knew must have arisen from him; but when, or how, his manœuvres were devised and executed, they could not guess by observation on himself. For, in all situations, he seemed equally open and disengaged.

Ripperda passed behind the Bavarian party, surrounded by the foreign ambassadors. The Electress was mortified at the sight.—"Behold the flatterers!" cried she.

"Dogs will worship the moon!" answered Wharton; "and their hymn is desperate howling."

Without farther thought of what covered the polished brow of his mistress with heavy frowns, he turned to rally one of the young ladies of honour, for having refused to dance. The Bavarian almoner stood near. He was the only person, excepting the Electress, who knew that the late rupture between France and Spain was the work of Wharton. Marvelling within himself at the volatility of the man, who had so circumvented the gravest heads, and at the jocund indifference with which he beheld the open sway of his political adversary, the worthy ecclesiastic, with a half-reproaching smile, touched his arm. "I believe, Duke," said he, "it is all one to you, whether you fire your own or another's territories; from very *gaieté de cœur*, as either burn, you play!"

"Groaning over calamities is to double them," replied Wharton; "and I never had any passion for sackcloth."

"No," replied the Electress; "I believe your perversity enjoys the wreck that has been made of your own plans."

"When the wind blows, he is but a fool who sits down to cry in the blast! Common sense, my sweet Electress, draws his cloak about, and walks merrily through the storm."

"But he does not scoff at the destructive elements," replied the ecclesiastic. "May not the Duke de Ripperda think disparagingly of so smiling a rival?"

"My good Lord Almoner," returned Wharton, "I care not what Duke de Ripperda thinks. There is a season for all things; and when I am with the fair, I forget the follies of other men, and content myself with my own."

Whatever were his motives with regard to Louis, no act of recognition passed, either from his voice or his looks, towards him, during the whole evening; and Louis, taking the tone from a judgment his enthusiasm deemed infallible, behaved towards him with the same reserve. They often approached each other in the change of amusements; they sometimes passed close, and then the heart of Louis beat, and his cheek glowed, as he felt the dear attraction. As he was handing the daughter of the Princess de Waradin to the supper room, he saw Wharton at a distance, in one of the vestibules, conversing with the Count de Patinos. This was the haughty Spaniard, whom Wharton had observed turn away with such jealous contempt of the admiration Louis had excited: he was of the highest rank amongst the young grandees who had joined the embassy, and could ill brook a rival near his proud pretensions.

The Electress and her party did not stay supper. It was in a style answerable to the august *jour de fête;* and, at a late hour, the Emperor and Empress rose. Before Louis could pass from the table at which he sat, to join his father, who had been the distinguished personage at the imperial board, he was intercepted by a moving and involving throng. In short, he soon learned that, from Ripperda's unexampled favour with the reconciled sovereigns, his son was become an object of calculating and universal attention. Some of the Spaniards had even drawn off from the proud side of De Patinos, and glided towards Louis, to gain, by his means, a freer passage into the circles which seemed so eager to make him their centre.

De Patinos was young, handsome, and ambitious. He was the son of the Marquis de Castellor, and the near kinsman of the venerable Grimaldo, the present ostensible minister in the cabinet of Spain. Therefore, to see such, almost regal, honours paid to the Duke de Ripperda, whom he affected to consider only the agent of that minister,

aroused all the indignation of his family consequence. But that himself should be overlooked and disregarded, in the presence of what he called the upstart Marquis de Montemar, — because he was the son of this arrogant Ripperda, — inflamed him with a hatred, that only waited opportunity to show its malignant nature.

As wealth and rank are generally considered the corner-stones of happiness, it was not to be wondered at, that a marriage with such a foreigner as Louis de Montemar should be considered an advantageous object, by many of the most illustrious families at the German court. The restoration of Ripperda to his Spanish rights, had given him rank with the first nobles in any land. His blood was superior to most of them, as it flowed from the mingled current of three lines of princes; and his riches — from his restituted property in Spain and the Indies, from his former fortune, transported from the Netherlands, and daily redoubling by the exhaustless resources of commerce — were beyond the powers of calculation. It was not, then, a subject of surprise, though it might be of envy, that the heir of all this wealth and honours should be a point of ambition to the proudest mothers in Vienna; and, as the expectant was also handsome and accomplished, it was not a wonder that many of the daughters smiled upon the young De Montemar. He saw many fair, and more elegant; but none so fair, none so conspicuously elegant, as the graceful Otteline, whose absent form floated in fond regrets at the bottom of his heart. He sighed to think that the spirit was not so fair as its temple; and then he sighed again, as he checked himself for the repining pang which accompanied the remembrance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE two following days were passed in official arrangements, previous to the execution of certain articles in the treaty, which the Spanish sovereigns were impatient to have

performed. Ripperda spent the evenings with the Austrian ministers, and Louis at the Princess de Waradin's; but, on the morning of the third day, when he was sitting at his post, and making minutes of some preliminaries, which the Emperor demanded before the actual betrothment of his eldest daughter to Prince Carlos of Spain, the Empress, who was in her husband's private cabinet at this discussion, stood over Louis as he wrote; and when he had finished his memorandums, she said, in a low voice, "My daughter is now well enough to bear company; you will see her and Countess Altheim in my drawing-room to-night. You must speak to Maria-Theresa; for we require of you to impress her as favourably of your Prince, as you have managed to do her governess in behalf of yourself."

Elizabeth turned away; and Louis saw neither the paper that was before him, nor the royal presence leaving the room. He was lost in the tumult of his thoughts; till his father, touching his arm, told him the council was broken up.

When Ripperda received the invitation for the evening, for himself and his son, he asked permission to include the Count de Patinos in the proposed honour; as it would gratify King Philip to have the imperial notice extended in succession to the young grandees of the suite.

"But never to the exclusion of De Montemar," replied the Empress: "I regard him as my own *élève*. Do with the rest as you please, Duke; for you know the pleasure I have in promoting your interest."

Ripperda knew all the avenues to the noble heart of Elizabeth; and he made a reply that lit up her gracious countenance with an emotion direct from the soul.

Louis walked as in a dream, from the hour in which he was told he should meet Otteline, to the moment of his going to the palace. The Imperial saloon was full, though not crowded. Having paid his homage to the Empress, he turned as she directed him, while certain well-known sounds were vibrating on the harp. The object he expected met his eyes. The instruments of music were in an adjoining apartment, opened to the saloon by a canopied arch. Otteline stood there, just risen from the harp, and

attending to something that was addressed to her by the Archduchess, her pupil, who was seated at the harpsichord. The timid bride wore the portrait of her future husband, Prince Carlos, suspended at her neck; and she was evidently preparing to sing to the Emperor, her father, who stood near her. Lovely as she was, in the first morning of her youth, her soft blue eyes turned upwards, with a gaze of almost infantine attention, upon the face of her beautiful instructress; yet the eye of the beholder could not rest upon the blooming girl. That beautiful instructress seemed nothing less than a being of a superior order. She leaned over her, like some bright creature of the air, hovering near her sweet, but earthly charge. Louis felt a mist pass over his memory. The abhorrent words of her lips, which he thought must burn before him, in accusing characters, for ever, flew at once from their station; and his heart rose in his bosom, with an impulsive violence, to throw himself at her feet, and forget all the world and himself, in the rapturous moment of swearing that he loved her. But, if celestial spirits do indeed surround the path of those who contend for heaven, the guardian seraph of Louis at that moment breathed upon his dissolving soul, and strengthened it to virtue. With a bitter contempt of his weakness, he tore his eyes from the dangerous contemplation; and followed his father and the Empress, to pay his respects to her Imperial husband.

While the Emperor discoursed with Ripperda, Elizabeth addressed her favourite.

"Otteline," said she, with a smile, "I hope you will not grant less gracious notice to the Marquis de Montemar, than that with which you honoured the Chevalier de Phaffenberg!"

The Countess looked up with a blush bright as the tints of Aurora; and while she sought to meet the eyes of Louis, which were covered with their "veiled lids," she softly answered, "The Marquis de Montemar is too well convinced of the esteem in which I held the Chevalier de Phaffenberg, to require that I should increase my consideration of him under any other name."

He bowed in silence; but her Majesty, seeing the Em-

peror and Ripperda walk together into the adjoining room, as she turned to follow them, added, "De Montemar, I leave you to assist the Countess in selecting a duet for my daughter."

This command Louis could not disobey; and though a quivering fire shot through all his veins, he was not the less determined to persevere in the assumption of a coldness he would have given worlds to have then found round his heart. With obedient haste, and to occupy himself, he began to turn over the music books. The young Princess took hold of the Countess's arm, and artlessly whispered,

"Do ask the Marquis de Montemar, whether Prince Carlos is really like this ugly picture!"

Otteline whispered in return: — "I am sure the Marquis de Montemar will be honoured in replying to your Highness; and he will tell you that Prince Carlos is very handsome."

None of this was spoken so low, but that Louis heard it all; and the Archduchess, holding up the jewelled portrait, said to him in a timid voice, — "Do tell me, if he is so very disagreeable? I could never endure to leave my beautiful mamma, and charming governess, to look always upon so frightful a face as this!"

Louis glanced at the picture; which was, indeed, the portrait of a plain, but it was a sensible countenance. The ingenuous eyes of the Princess turned from it, to those of Louis, with anxious enquiry.

"I never saw the Prince," replied he; "but your Highness must pardon me, if I do not think this portrait disagreeable. It expresses a noble mind; and, without such an expression, the finest features in the world would want the soul of beauty."

Maria-Theresa looked earnestly in the face of Louis. She had never done so before; and then, turning her eyes again on the picture, she drew a deep sigh.

"Come, will not your Highness sing?" asked the Countess, presenting a duet.

"No," replied she; "I shall go, and beg mamma to permit you to sing alone;" then, as she was leaving her seat, she put her arm round her governess's neck, and

softly said—"Oh, my happy Otteline! He that you are to marry has both a handsome and a noble countenance!"

Louis could not escape hearing this; nor seeing the quick pressure with which the Countess strained her young charge to her breast; who, in some apprehension that she had been overheard, broke away with a slight blush tinging her lily complexion.

He was now alone in the music-room with her, whose presence he felt in every nerve. The parting whisper of the Princess, and the responsive action of the Countess, followed by a fluttering sigh which vibrated in his heart, made him tremble for himself. He knew not how to fly, and he felt it was perilous to remain. Hastily closing a music-book, he said with a forced smile, "Since the Archduchess declines singing, my duty here terminates!" and with a hurrying bow, he started from the instrument.

Otteline was, now, in a no less agitated state than himself. She read in his averted looks, and haste to leave her, that she was no longer to consider him as her lover; and, not suspecting the real cause, her own ambitious views suggested to her, that his father's higher prospects were the origin of this changed demeanour. Aware that carrying matters with too lofty a hand had lost her the son of the Marquis Santa Cruz, she determined on a different mode with that of Ripperda; and while a large drapery of the curtained arch was yet between him, and the observation of the company in the saloon, she ventured, in rapid but suppressed accents, to murmur out—"Oh, Marquis, why are you not the obscure De Phaffenberg?—Then, we should not have met:—or never parted thus!"

Her voice had arrested him. He hesitated: he stood: but he did not speak. She resumed.

"It is as I foresaw. My enemies have prevailed!—Your father objects to my humble birth; you turn from me, to seek a more illustrious bride?"

"No, madam," returned Louis, believing himself now called upon to pass the final sentence upon his relapsing passion; "my father has not yet spoken to me on the subject. Neither do I seek nor wish for any other bride:—For—Oh, Otteline," cried he, turning on her a look, in

which all the contention of his soul was declared; "where could I find one so lovely? — one, to whom I would more intensely devote this adoring heart? But yourself has separated us for ever!"

She turned pale, as the pearls which bound her forehead.

"Then my enemies have been at work!" cried she. "If they have coupled my name with Don Ferdinand d'Osorio's in any tale of slander, believe it to be as false as that, with which the Electress of Bavaria would, so lately, have sullied my fair fame. You know how I became the victim there! And this is invented, to put you from making the only restitution, that can now redeem me to the world!"

The vehemence with which she spoke, and the mention of Don Ferdinand's name, connected with her own, cast a new and an appalling light upon the apprehension of her lover. He recollected, that Don Ferdinand had left Vienna, to rid himself from what, his father told Mr. Athelstone, was a disgraceful entanglement of his affections; and, to find it possible, that Otteline might have been its object, confounded all his faculties. The broad appeal to his honour, in the last sentence of her remonstrance, did not the less convince him, that all was not right, in the tenacity with which she urged bonds on him, she suspected he wished to break.

"Madam," replied he, "I have heard no slanderous tales against you. Until this moment, I was not aware that Don Ferdinand d'Osorio was even known to you. My heart alone is your accuser."

The renewed emotion with which the latter words were uttered, and even their import, revived the colour of hope upon the cheek of the Countess. She thought, if his heart alone were her accuser, she had also an advocate there, that would be too powerful for so unassisted an adversary. She smiled bewitchingly, for it was through rushing tears; and, laying her hand on his arm, said in a tender and trusting voice, — "And what does it allege against me?"

Louis did not look towards her; but the sensations

which shook him, only rendered him more desperate to fulfil his resolution; and he exclaimed, "That I did love you—that I was grateful for the regard with which you honoured me,—I believe I shall carry the scars on my heart, to my grave!—but, with me, there is a power beyond love:—I would sooner have this heart torn from my body; or all it delights in, buried from my sight; than purchase their enjoyment, by admitting one stain on my conscience. When I last saw you, in the conference with the chancellor and the Empress, you declared, and proved yourself of an opposite opinion! You violated the sacredness of a seal; and you defended that breach of honour, on principles which destroy me to remember!"

Louis stopped, and covered his bloodless face with his hand. The Countess, though struck, as by a thunderbolt, at so unexpected a disclosure, gathered hope from the pale statue that uttered it. "His frozen virtue will relent!" thought she; and clasping his arm, with the warm pressure of doubting agitation, she tremblingly said, "Oh, De Montemar, is such the reward of my self-sacrifice? What am I to expect from this exacting virtue?"

"That I may die," replied Louis, with a strong effort; "but that we meet no more."

This was the axe to the ambition of Otteline; and, with a shriek she could not restrain, she staggered, and fell to the floor.

The convulsive cry, and the confused noise of her fall, were heard in the same moment, in the adjoining saloon. Elizabeth, who was overlooking the imperial card-table, rose from her chair. Charles was at quadrille with Ripperda, the Princess de Waradin, and another lady. Every body started from their respective positions: but no one, except the young Archduchess, durst follow her Majesty into the room, as she had not commanded the attendance of any.

The Emperor laid down his cards, and asked what had happened. Ripperda was not aware that his son was a party concerned; and, with perfect indifference, following the example of the Sovereign, he quitted his chair. But the Princess de Waradin, who had observed Elizabeth

leave Louis with the favourite, rather sarcastically replied to the Emperor's question,—

"If your Majesty will do the Marquis de Montemar the honour of enquiring of him, he can give every information; as he has been *tête-à-tête* with Countess Altheim, in that room, for some time."

Ripperda knew the character of the favourite; and, recollecting his son's admiration of her, with an alarm he did not allow to be visible, he requested the Emperor's commands to assist the Empress's interference, in whatever accident might have happened.

"Certainly," replied he; "and take any body, who may be of service, with you."

This licence sent every body into the room.

Elizabeth had found Louis, on one knee, by the side of the insensible Otteline. He was pale, and speechless. She feared, that he might soon be in the same state with her he ineffectually attempted to raise; and, while the young Archduchess clung, weeping, to her lifeless friend, the Empress turned round at the approach of persons. The first that drew near her being Sinzendorff, in a hurrying, but suppressed voice, she said, — "Chancellor, take De Montemar from these people's eyes."

Almost without consciousness, Louis obeyed the impulse of Sinzendorff's arm, and soon found himself withdrawn from the gaze of strangers. The chancellor had led him, without speaking, across a passage that opened from the music-room into the Imperial library. When he saw his agitated companion throw himself into a seat, and strike his forehead, whence the veins seemed starting, with his clasped hands, the worthy statesman laid his hand on his shoulder, and broke silence.

"Marquis," said he, "will you tell me frankly; — do you love the Countess Altheim?"

The friendly tone in which this was asked, recalled Louis in some measure to himself; and, without altering his position, for he shrunk from showing the weakness that might be discovered in his countenance, he answered, —"I do love her, more than I could have thought it possible, after a full conviction that she can no longer be con-

ducive to my happiness! Oh, my lord, you were present at the scene which decided my fate. What she then avowed, convinced me that she and I must never be united: I have just dared to tell her so. But the situation to which it has reduced her severs my soul from my body."

"Virtuous young man!" cried Sinzendorff, "let it not sever your principle from your soul! You are formed for better things than an intriguing woman's slave. Hear what I am now going to say to you! But, as you are worthy the confidence I place in you, and as a breach of it would ruin me with the Imperial family, you must not discover, even to your father, that the facts I am about to state have been learnt from me. When I have told them, examine into their truth, and act on the result. Know, then, that the woman who causes you this emotion, is unworthy of a single regret from a mind like yours. Nay, start not!" Louis groaned, and the Count proceeded. "Could you be satisfied with beauty alone, I acknowledge it is there in amplest perfection; but she is without one feminine feeling, wholly abandoned to ambition, and careless by what means she raises herself to the point of her hopes. At the age of sixteen, she married one of the worst characters in the Imperial court, to be elevated to the rank of nobility. When a widow, she attempted the affections of several noble strangers, who, however, were too wary to be taken in her toils; but, at last, she entangled the passions of my sister's son, Don Ferdinand d'Osorio; and wrought him to the most extravagant excesses, while her own selfish aim was only to perpetuate her rank. This, his father told me; he interfered, and the young man recovered his senses. Her next trial was on yourself! And, I solemnly assure you, that, from the first of your appearance in this palace, she knew you were not the Chevalier de Phaffenberg. And, though you need not doubt her preferring your youth and graces to the age and decrepitude of the dotard to whom she first sold her duty as a wife, I know her well, and can aver, that she has no value for the superiority of your mental qualities. Do not mislead yourself, De Montemar, by in-

vesting her with your own feelings. It is not the loss of yourself, that caused the situation in which you left her; but the loss of an illustrious husband;—the loss of one, who would have re-introduced her to the circle, which her pride insulted, and the members of which dread, while they despise her. My dear Marquis, excepting the infatuated Empress, she has not one friend in Vienna!"

"She warned me, that she had enemies!" replied Louis, in an interrupted voice; "but, with me, her worst enemy is herself. Chancellor, I am grateful for what you have said; and you shall find, by my fidelity, that I am so. But not even these charges could have weighed against the pleadings of my heart in her favour, had I not been present that fatal evening, in the *boudoir*."

"A man of your principles," replied Sinzendorff, "ought to regard it as a providential evening! If they be principles, you will abide by them; and I shall see you free, honoured, and happy. If they be no more than sentiment, (which is common with youth!) they will evaporate in her first sighs, and I shall soon have to congratulate her as Marchioness de Montemar! In that case, I will forget all that I have said,—since I cannot disbelieve it."

Louis felt the force, and the friendship, of this admonition.

"Your Excellency shall never have reason to forget the generous interest you have taken in my happiness. But, in apology for this emotion, you must accept the excuse of one, young as myself—(but, oh, how enviable his occasion!) *my body trembles at the purpose of my soul*."

Before the chancellor could utter the commendation this resolution merited, a page appeared at the door, to inform him, the Emperor had dismissed the company, and that the Duke de Ripperda awaited the Marquis in the vestibule.

CHAPTER XXV.

Not a word passed between Louis and his father, while they drove home. Count de Patinos was in the carriage; and would have sat mute also, had not the Duke, with his usual power over all tempers, brought the sullen youth to converse freely on the entertainments of the evening.

As soon as they alighted, Ripperda desired his son to accompany him to his cabinet. Louis was in such heavy internal distress, he hailed the command as a summons to unburden his unloaded bosom; and to receive that advice, or rather support, in the fulfilment of his resolution, he found he so wofully required. He followed his father with alacrity. When the Duke had closed the door, and saw that his son had thrown himself into a seat, he took a place near him.

"Now," said he, "the time is come, when you are to give the confidence you promised. I no longer consider myself the arbiter of your conduct. That responsibility I leave to yourself. The extensive duties of my own destiny are sufficient for me. I, therefore, shall advise, but I command no more. You must rise or fall by your own resolves; and, if I guess right, you stand now, on a point of no insignificant decision. Tell me, what has passed between the Countess Altheim and you, to give rise to the extraordinary scene of this evening; and to sanction a request which the Empress made to me at parting, that I would go to her to-morrow, *to decide on the fate of one who was dear to her as her own life!* Have you pledged yourself to the Countess?"

"I hope not," earnestly replied Louis.

"I do not understand you!" returned his father. "By what has just occurred, she has shown to the whole court, what she wishes people to suppose has passed between you; and you must be aware, that the favourite of Elizabeth is not to be treated with idle gallantry. What grounds, then,

have you to hope that you have not pledged yourself beyond recall? Or, did the warning voice of the Sieur Ignatius come too late?"

"It came too late," replied Louis, "to save me from the intoxication of her beauties; and no prudence on my part could counteract the effects of that luckless rencontre with the Electress of Bavaria. Yet, in the wildest tumults of my heart, I still wrestled with myself. In the very moment of my greatest weakness, I recollected the Sieur's admonition, and, re-awakened to filial duty, checked the vow on my lips; and, telling her I was not my own, I trust, I saved my honour."

Ripperda shook his head: "Louis, did I not warn you against the power of beauty?"

"You did!" vehemently replied he; "and, from this hour, I forswear it for ever!"

Being ignorant of the real cause of this abjuration, it surprised the Duke. He had supposed that Louis's disorder had arisen from a consciousness of having trangressed the spirit, if not the letter, of the Sieur's injunctions; and that Otteline's emotion was to be dated from fear, that his father would not sanction the romantic passion of her lover. For many reasons, the Duke had no wish to sanction it; and, while he regretted that woman was fair, and youth susceptible, he was pleased to hear the unexpected exclamation from his son. He did not remark on it, but required a recital of particulars, word for word, of all that had passed between him and the Countess; that he might be an impartial judge of Louis's freedom, or his bonds.

He obeyed ingenuously, till he came to the parts where her conduct might be translated into a direct wooing of himself. Ripperda observed his hesitation.

"Proceed," said he; "I can divine what your honour, or your delicacy, inclines you to conceal. She played upon your open nature, to make you believe she loved you so passionately, she could not await your time of drawing the secret from her! I know the sex, Louis. For more than thirty years, I have been an object of their various practices. And, once for all, you may receive it as an unerring rule, that, when a woman runs before a man in the pro-

fession of her love, her love is nothing more than profession. Her views are something baser."

Ripperda pursued the subject; and Louis was, at last, brought to acknowledge that the Countess had given him reason to believe that she loved him devotedly, — too devotedly; and then, without withholding a circumstance, he related the whole affair, from the commencement of their acquaintance, till the moment when he wished to close it for ever.

"Oh, sir!" cried he, "I love, and I despise her. And yet, when I stood over her insensible form, which had become so from the wound I had inflicted, I could not but ask myself, — Am I a god, that I should thus ruthlessly condemn human error, and break the heart that loves me?"

The Duke was a long time silent, after his son had ceased speaking. Then, looking up, he abruptly said, — "Louis de Montemar, you are the first man of your sort, with whom I ever came in contact. I see of what spirit you are; but it will not do, in the station you fill, or in the times in which we live. The world is always changing, and you must go with it, or it will leave you. I ought not to have left you so long at Lindisfarne!"

Louis turned his eye on his father.

"I do not blame your instructor, for educating you like himself. But the style is obsolete, Louis. Had you been intended for a desert island, it might have been well; but a citizen of the world requires other maxims. The fault is mine, that I did not bring you to me before. Now, you come into society, like an unarmed man into the midst of his enemies; and, instead of hastening to shelter, you expose yourself to their weapons, by acts of impotent hostility. You must content yourself in maintaining your own principles; to stretch another's virtue to your standard, you will always find a vain work of supererogation."

Louis again looked on his father with a questioning eye; for he could not comprehend to what these remarks tended. Ripperda laid his hand on his son's arm. "In all that you have described of the Countess Altheim," said he, "she has only acted as an ambitious woman would have done; and ambition is not less rooted in the sex, than

in ourselves. She must not, therefore, be contemned for that. Neither do I object to her on account of her obscure birth. The blood of your family is too essentially illustrious not to raise to its own elevation, whatever we mingle with its stream. But I wish to strengthen our hands in Spain, by a marriage between my heir and one of its native daughters. Besides, the Countess Altheim is dangerous in herself. Her haughty spirit would embroil you with this, and every court to which you might conduct her; and persons would be inclined to disrespect the man, who could suffer the weakness of passion to subject him to an union so universally despised."

During this discourse, the confidential warning of the chancellor seemed to sound again in the ear of Louis. He recollected the hints which Wharton had dropped on the same subject; and, with sickening attention, listened to his father, who, in less reserved language, related every leading event of the life of the beautiful favourite. No word glanced at her honour, as a chaste woman; but every sentence completed the portrait of mean-spirited, insatiable ambition. Shocked to the soul by the description of Count Altheim, whose character was of such grossness, that it seemed impossible for a virtuous woman to consent to be his wife, Louis hastily exclaimed, as the Duke rose to depart, "I will never see her more! I will never trust myself with any of her betraying sex! Henceforth, my father," cried he, with a feverish smile, "I will have no mistress but glory! Why, why did I ever withdraw my eyes from her divine lineaments?"

"She always suffers, when woman disputes her rights," returned the Duke.

Louis kissed his father's hand, and retired to his own apartments. His spirit felt beaten and bruised. It cowered, under a sense of self-degradation; and, throwing himself on his bed, he passed a night of painful retrospection, on all that he had seen and heard of her, who was so lately the object of his untameable wishes.

"Cold, calculating, and unprincipled!" cried he; "and to such a woman, did I give the first flames of my heart! I lighted up its sacred altar, to a fiend, in the form of the

Queen of Heaven! Wretch that I am, to have so debased what was most noble within me! To sigh for a piece of painted clay,—to adore — and, even now, to weep over a creature, whose soul, if I could behold it divested of its beautiful garments, would disgust me by its sordid earthward visage!"

The morning found his agitated spirits subsided to a calm. The intemperance of passion was extinguished in his breast; and, as he relinquished the desire of possessing her, who had now lost every grace in his eyes, he strengthened in the hope that the killing words he had last pronounced to her, were final to her views on him.

Noon brought several visiters to interrupt the studies, which were his usual morning occupation, and, generally, his unfailing tranquillisers. Some of these unconscious invaders were young Austrians, come to invite him to share in diversions for the day and the evening; and an hour passed gaily on in the vivid conversations of versatile youth. A few of the Spaniards made their entrance, and disappeared again. De Patinos was not among them: he had reproached those who had shown a wish to cultivate the kindness of Louis, with a mean submission to the minion of temporary fortune; they, therefore, merely made their bow, and, without joining in the discourse, soon took their leave.

Louis found an amusing diversity in the Austrian group. Most of them held commissions in the Imperial service, and were full of the campaign against Turkey, which the valour of Prince Eugene had just brought to a close. Others were merely jocund spirits, "hot with the fires of youth, and high in blood." And a few had a philosophic turn—some in the straight, but most in the crooked path; and these latter were the least agreeable of the set, as they united an ostentatious assumption of purity of intellect, with a systematic corruption of morals. Louis soon comprehended their characters, and treated them with marked avoidance. The military young men were decidedly his favourites; their profession was that of his own secret preference; and their manners were most congenial to his taste. There was a brave ardour in their deportment, and

a careless enunciation of their sentiments, which, whether wrong or right, had no aim but the utterance of the moment; and, commonly, could as easily be turned from the wrong to the right, as from the right to wrong. The faction was in their blood, not in their understanding; and when the one was cooled, the other might soon be recalled to order.

While Louis was attending to Count Koninseg's account of the tremendous battle of Belgrade, a messenger arrived from the Duke de Ripperda. He brought a letter for the Marquis de Montemar. With a blanched cheek he broke the seal; but the contents were a reprieve. The Duke told him he had not yet seen the Empress. She was gone to the baths at Baden, with Maria-Theresa, who had sustained a relapse; and Countess Altheim was their companion. The Emperor had retired with his council for a few days to the Laxemburg, to avoid the persecution of the foreign ministers; and thither, by his command, Ripperda had accompanied him.

Louis closed the letter with a renovated countenance. He was left to do the honours of the ambassador's table, not only to its usual guests, but to a party of noble Austrians, whom Ripperda had invited. The Duke being absent, the Spaniards were haughty and reserved at dinner; and as soon as the desert was placed, De Patinos, and another of the name of Orendayn, rose from their seats; and bowing coldly to the young secretary of legation, and his guests, quitted the room, to join societies more agreeable to their humour.

Till the opera hour the time passed merrily with the Austrian group; and forgetful of his bosom's care, by their animated host. The ringleader of discontent being gone, the rest of the Spaniards fell in with the cheerfulness of the company. Subjects of taste, war, and beauty, ruled the glowing hours; but on the latter subject Louis discoursed uneasily, and he was glad to see Koninseg point to the signal on his watch for adjourning to the theatre.

"My aunt will be impatient," cried he; "she is determined that he who danced with Amelia at her first ball, shall conduct her to her first opera."

It was also the first opera to Louis. He had never seen any in England; and, until now, he had no opportunity of visiting that at Vienna. The *Palais d'Espagne* soon poured forth its gay inmates. Louis and Koninseg turned towards the mansion of the Princess de Waradin. It was lit up in the fullest splendour, although no other visiters were expected but De Montemar and her nephew. The artless Amelia smiled and blushed, and smiled again, when her mother, putting her arm into Koninseg's, requested Louis to take charge of her daughter. He politely obeyed; and led her to the carriage, while she prattled all the way, with the volubility of a giddy child, delighted at being treated like a woman.

The opera-house presented but a gloomy appearance, from the extreme scarcity of light, till the curtain drew up, and discovered a brilliant chandelier, which hung directly over the actors. The illumination of the stage cast the audience into deeper obscurity; therefore, of the company in the boxes, Louis had very little cognizance; while the dresses and decorations of the opera, and the exquisite singing, might have filled him with admiration, had not the style of the music reminded him of the first time he had heard the like, when the fair Italian sung in his uncle's castle! He recollected his consequent feelings that night; and, humiliated in the remembrance, he compared those hours of infatuation, with his admiration of Otteline, and exclaimed to himself—"What a slave have I been to my eye and ear! Music I shall never like again; and beauty I shall abhor!"

As there was little of the latter, excepting youth and a blooming complexion, in the smiling Amelia, to warn him of his abjuration, her incessant questions, and remarks, on what was doing on the stage, amused him; and he was quite unconscious how much his attention to what she said, gratified the views of her mother.

Apostola Zero, the father of the regular Italian Opera, had been invited to Vienna by the Emperor; and, to reward his acquiescence, Charles invested him with two dissimilar, but productive employments — Imperial historiographer, and poet of the court opera. The grateful

Italian dedicated his comprehensive genius solely to his munificent patron; and the present performance was the first night of a new composition he had formed on the story of Proserpine.

The last act was a representation of the infernal kingdom; laying bare the foundations of Ætna, and exhibiting all the terrors of the subterranean world. The curtain had hardly dropped, which it did in some confusion, when an extraordinary bustle was heard behind the scenes. Soon after, the theatre filled with smoke, and cries of fire were distinctly heard from behind. Persons from the boxes jumped on the stage, while the curtain was rent down by those before and behind it; and the scene of horror that was discovered to those, who were not so entirely absorbed in their fears but they could look around them, is not to be described. The fire was seen bursting in several directions; men were mounted aloft, on the burning rafters, breaking down, with hatchets, the combustible apparatus in the way. Water was dashing and streaming every where. The terrible light which filled the stage too well pourtrayed the inside of a raging volcano; sheets of flame, like forked tongues, threw themselves forward from a thousand gaping mouths, licking the ceiling, and entering the boxes. Shrieks and groans, and dismal cries, the iron clang of hammers, the fall of timber, and the rush of fire and of people, assailed the ear in one horrid moment of time.

At the first alarm, the ladies in the box with Louis, had been hurried out by him, and some other gentlemen who had joined them in the course of the evening. The poor little Amelia, true to nature, no sooner thought herself in danger, than, breaking from the protecting arms of Louis (who had caught her in them to hurry her through the pressing crowd), she threw herself upon the bosom of her mother, and fainted away. The Princess had more fortitude; and, assisted by her nephew, bore out the insensible girl; while Louis, and the other gentlemen, made a passage for them to the great door.

In passing the entrance of an obscure gallery, that led to an upper range of boxes, he distinguished, in the midst

of the uproar, shrieks of peculiar distress. It was the very cry of despair. Looking round for a moment, he saw that his present charges were well enough protected, and that he might safely leave them, to attempt succouring this terrific appeal. But even in the instant he was turning to obey the impulse, he heard a fearful crash behind him; and a rush of people followed, who bore him and his party, like a flood, into the square before the theatre. All, then, was secure with them. But for the poor suppliant, whose cries had pierced his heart, she was either lost, or abandoned to the flames! At least, he would attempt to hear if her voice yet sounded.

Struggling his way back, through the last crowds which were making their escape, some of whom, feeling him push by them in so destructive a direction cried aloud, — "Whomsoever you seek, must have perished. The top of the stage has fallen in, and the theatre is full of fire."

But Louis, still fancying he heard the voice, pressed more determinately forward, and soon found himself surrounded by smoke alone. No sounds were distinct, but the raging of the flames in the interior of the building, which roared in their work of destruction, like the temple of Eolus, with all its winds. The heat was so intense, that perspiration burst from all his pores, and the air around him was a burning vapour. He hesitated to advance; and while his lungs filled to suffocation, and the black smoke gleamed with horrid light, he was stepping back, when the shriek burst forth again. Louis flew to the sound. He rushed up a few steps into a narrow passage, answering the cries as he advanced, in a loud voice, promising help. At the extremity of the passage, which was short, he was interrupted by a closed door, on the other side of which was the terrified suppliant, shaking it with frantic violence. "I cannot open it!" cried she, in answer to his demand.

"Stand from it, then," said he.

He was obeyed; and dashing his foot against it, it flew from its hinges, and a lady instantly precipitated herself into his arms. Another started from her knees, and, with a hardly articulate cry of joy, threw herself towards him. Louis clasped his almost insensible burthen firmly

to his breast, and bidding her companion hold fast by his cloak, as they must move swiftly, to have any chance of escape, he turned round; and the lady, winding her arm in his mantle, flew by his side, till they plunged at once into the dreadful smoke, now red with advancing flames. He dashed impetuously forward; when his almost stifled companion, partaking the desperate exertion, even rushed before him, and in a moment afterwards they found themselves, with the issuing volumes, on the steps of the portico. To descend them, and be in the midst of the square, with his motionless load, seemed but the action of an instant. Dangers of a different kind now menaced them, — the flying rafters from the consuming building, the pressure of people, with the throng of carriages, and every confusion attendant on so tremendous a scene. In an agitated voice, his companion asked him, whether he had strength to bear his insensible burthen to the opposite side of the quadrangle. Louis replied in the affirmative. She told him to go straight onwards, to the convent of Poor Augustines; and, as he obeyed, she clung closely to his arm.

When they arrived at the back of the convent, she let go her hold, and taking a key from her bosom, opened a little low door in the building, and whispered Louis to enter. When he was in, she locked the door again, and bid him follow her in silence. She walked hastily along a narrow stone passage, faintly lit by a few glimmering lamps. Opening an iron grating at the end, she issued into a garden, which she as swiftly crossed; Louis still following, while the lady he carried, appeared to be reviving under the influence of the fresh air. A high dark structure rose on the other side, the top of which was illumined by the reflected flames, which now rose in spires from the burning theatre. In the side of this building was an arched door, surmounted by a cross. The lady opened it, and Louis followed her into a little chapel; thence, through several winding passages, till they brought him to a superb room, where he laid his charge, now warm with returning animation, on a sofa.

His fair guide instantly applied essences to the recovering

senses of the lady, and, in a few minutes, she opened her eyes. He could only see this happy change, by the gleam which fell on them, as the lids slowly raised; for the apartment was immense, and only one wax-light stood on a distant table. A moment after, she looked apprehensively round on the chamber, then on her friend, and then on Louis; when, with a shriek of joy, she exclaimed, "We are saved! — and, by whom!"

Her head dropped on the arm she had seized, and tears followed this burst of feeling. Her friend bent only her head, and whispered something in her ear. The agitated lady replied, "No, no!" then raising herself from her weeping position, and turning to Louis, — "I have no words," said she, "in which to thank my preserver; and, I will not seek any, to deceive him. Even by this light, I can see that I owe my life to the intrepid humanity of the Marquis de Montemar."

The other lady obeyed the motion of her friend's hand, and set the solitary candle on a stand near them. In the full light, Louis recognised the face of the Electress of Bavaria, in the person he had carried from the flames. He had no thought in the recognition, but satisfaction at having rescued female helplessness from so direful a death, and his reply was in unison with his feelings. It was not a Princess he saw before him, nor the enemy of himself, and of his father; but a woman, agitated from past terror, and grateful to him for having averted its horrid consummation. The dishevelled, blackened, and even half-burnt condition of different parts of all their garments, showed how narrow had been the escape of the preserver, as well as the preserved.

The Electress explained the dreadful state of despair in which he had found her. For, hastening with her only attendant, Madame de Altenstein, through the box to the inner passage door, while attempting to open it, in the confusion of alarm, she turned the key wrong; and, having strained the lock by the violence of her first application, no effort could move it. She had then no resource, but cries for help; but they passed unnoticed. And, when the terrible crash, and the outcry at the fallen roof, assailed her

ear, in aimless phrensy, she would have rushed back into the box, and leaped over into the flames, had not her friend prevented her, by clinging to her knees. Again she flew to the door;—again she rent the air, with her unavailing shrieks,—"Till you came," continued she, "like a good angel, to my rescue!"

How different did the Electress appear now, in the eyes of Louis, from what she had seemed in the two former times of his seeing her. In the *boudoir* of Countess Altheim, she looked, and expressed herself, with the proud acknowledgment of a superior, to the vassals who had done her service. At the *fête* in *La Favorita*, she gazed around in haughty carelessness, and remarked with contemptuous sarcasm, on every object. But now, she leaned on the sofa, conversing with him, with the frankness of one who felt that danger and obligation had rendered them equal; and her fine black eyes, large and luminous as those of the wild gazelle, shone on him with eloquent gratitude. In all she said, the force of her character appeared; the strength of her understanding, and the energy of her feelings.

She explained the nature of the whisper, which her confidential attendant had made in her ear, while she lay on her arm. It told her, the Marquis de Montemar was her preserver; and it asked permission to dismiss him without further discovery. "But," continued the Electress, "would I not trust with my fortune, him who has preserved my life?"

She then said, that, should it be known to her enemies that she had been at the Opera, they would blazon it abroad, as a decisive blow to her hold on the affections of the people. The year of mourning for her husband was not yet expired; and should it be reported, that she had been at any public place before that stated period, the superstitious populace of Vienna (regarding it as a sacrilegious irreverence to the memory of the dead) would consider her, who had committed the act, as deserving excommunication from the Church, repudiation from the Imperial family, and a declaration from the Empire that she had forfeited all claims to her birthright.

"It is mere prejudice, that is against me;" said she,

"but a prejudice, having nothing to do with reason, is inaccessible to argument; hence, I can only avoid its sentence by concealment."

In excuse for the rashness of having incurred so great a risk, for so trifling a gratification, she pleaded her attachment to music; the innocence of the amusement, and the frequency with which she had enjoyed its stolen pleasures without discovery. By the indulgence of the father of the Augustines, who was a kinsman of Madame de Altenstein, she passed through the convent garden, which joined the Bavarian palace; and thence, gliding along by remote passages in the sacred dwelling, always reached the Opera House in security. No other person than Madame de Altenstein was ever her companion; therefore, when danger came, as no one knew she was there, she had none to watch her safety, or to seek her preservation.

Louis listened to her animated discourse with admiration; but at times, saw a *fierté* in her manner, that recalled to his recollection, her who had sanctioned the several attempts on his father's life, and his own.

She rose from the sofa with a countenance full of noble sensibility; "Come with me," said she, "and I will show you the heir of my gratitude."

He obeyed the motion of her hand, as she passed before him with a light step into an adjoining room. It was a bedchamber, and in the bed lay a boy in profound sleep. She approached him, and drew Louis to her side. She turned her eyes, brimming with tears, from the child, to her preserver; and putting the hand of the little sleeper, into that of Louis, she gently pressed them together.

"This is my son," said she, "and thus I commit him to the honour of a generous enemy."

Louis bent his lip to the cherubic hand that lay in his: and, without a word, glided back with the Electress into the apartment they had left.

She then told him, that, as the fortunes of herself and her son, depended on maintaining the affections of the major part of the citizens of Vienna, her fate was now in the power of his lips. In such a crisis, what was she to

expect from his honour to her or his devotedness to the Empress?

"My silence on what has passed," replied Louis.

"Then I am your friend for ever!" cried the Electress, her eyes flashing a triumphant fire, and her lips parting with the smile of conscious power; "you, and you alone, shall share my confidence, with a man worthy to have been the adviser of Augustus. Come to me to-morrow night at this hour, and I will bind you, heart to heart, with the glory of manhood, undaunted Wharton!"

Louis started back. She laid her hand on his arm.

"I know your bonds to the Empress, my ambitious and unjust rival! Your father's views, and her glozing tongue, have fastened you there beyond recall. It is not, then, your services as a partisan that I invoke; but to give your society to my private circle. You are my preserver! I repay you with my friendship, and that sentiment alone I require in return."

She now held his hand. He felt there was no deception in this demand, no covert device; and the noble frankness of the speaker so reminded him of the beloved friend whose heart she had offered him, that, with irrepressible emotion, he sunk upon his knee; and clasping the gracious hand he held earnestly, but respectfully, between his, he replied,—

"My veneration, illustrious Princess, must ever be yours. But I am born to withstand my heart; and while, in reverence to you, I keep an eternal silence on what has happened, in fidelity to myself I must never venture again into this gracious presence!"

The Electress was not aware that the agitation which rendered his voice and his looks so touching, as he remained at her feet, was excited by tender remembrances of the friend he again abjured in rejecting her society. She was pleased with what she regarded as proofs of sensibility to herself and her cause; and urged him, that if he feared to make his visits openly, they might be paid in secret. With brevity and ingenuous freedom, he showed how impossible it was for the son of Ripperda, in his present notorious situation (as the great promoter of all that concerned the pragmatic sanction), to visit the adversary of

such a decree, either openly or in secret. If openly, he must assign a reason for such apparent contradiction in conduct; and the only adequate reason could not be given without injury to the Electress. Secret visits could not be made without a chance of detection; and, that incurred, the ruin of his own honour must be the consequence.

" I see the cogency of your arguments," returned she; " but I grieve to allow them unanswerable. Fortune may yet favour us. You have twice assisted me in distress. If it happen a third time," added she, smiling impressively, " take care of your destiny! At present, I grant your release. Silence must be our mutual bond, till we can meet in open day!"

" Silence, inviolable silence," returned Louis, as he put her hand to his lips, and rose to withdraw.

" Altenstein," cried she, " give me that casket."

The lady obeyed; and the Electress, pressing a spring, opened it. She took out a small miniature of herself, set in plain gold.

" I intended this for the bosom of my best counsellor," said she; " but he will not object the transfer. Take it, De Montemar. It will not, by word or action, betray your esteem for Maria of Bavaria."

" I need not the picture, since the image is stamped on my heart!" said Louis, pressing it to his breast, and then laying it back into the open casket. " I must not be the possessor of so dangerous a treasure."

A vivid colour kindled on the cheek of the Electress: with a little elevation of her head, she closed the lid of the box upon the portrait, and said, " For a brave man, Marquis, you are a very coward! But it shall be as you say. Farewell, till more propitious hours!"

Louis bowed.

" Altenstein," continued she, " shall conduct you out by a private door; and then —— Farewell!"

She stretched her hand to him: he again put it to his lips; and as she instantly withdrew, he mechanically obeyed the summons of Madame to follow her.

As the faithful *Lady of the Key* (who certainly did not appear to have her name for nothing) dismissed Louis from

a little obscure door into a back street, he observed three men approaching: at sight of him, they evidently drew back into the shadow; and, as he passed them, the gleam of the lamps attached to this part of the Bavarian residence fell on his face. Of this he was unconscious; and thinking no more of the eavesdroppers (on whom his absorbed attention had not cast a second look), he walked swiftly along.

The observers were no other than Duke Wharton and the two Spaniards, De Patinos and Orendayn. As soon as he had passed, De Patinos exclaimed, "Surely, that is De Montemar!"

"And from the Bavarian palace by stealth!" remarked Orendayn. "What can it mean?"

Wharton was not less surprised than his companions at a rencontre with Louis at so incredible a place; and the more so, to see him issue from a portal, which, to this instant, was sacred to his own regress at hours of untimely counsel. But surprise did not appear in him by look, start, or exclamation.

"No," replied he, with perfect indifference; "it is one Phaffenberg, who, I believe, has been thought like the Spanish secretary."

"By Heaven!" said the Count, "I never was so deceived in my life! The air of his figure, and the turn of his profile, I could have sworn to; but, I now recollect, De Montemar went out a gay coxcomb, in embroidery and plumage, and this person is rather of dingy apparel."

"A poor scrivener," replied Wharton; "so I know not how he could be otherwise."

With this remark they proceeded down the street, towards the consuming theatre. De Patinos believed he had been mistaken, and gladly dismissed the subject of the hated De Montemar. But Orendayn, not less vindictive than his countryman, was more crafty; and suspecting the manner of Wharton (his own eyesight not being sufficiently clear to give him conviction), walked on in silence, ruminating on future observation. For the Duke himself, though he discoursed on a thousand subjects, he thought of none but Louis, till he could hear his appearance at that door accounted for by the Electress herself.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE first thought that occurred to Louis next day, was a wish to enquire at the door of the Bavarian palace, after the health of its noble inmates. The frank and ardent gratitude of the illustrious widow had interested his feelings; and, adding to this, the undescribable attaching quality which lies in an obligation, such as that he had conferred on the Electress, seemed to draw him towards her with an irresistible attraction. Benefits and gratefulness, when interchanged by generous natures, are bonds, garlanded in paradise. They draw by invisible cords, but their rivets are eternal. Gratitude looks up with endearing confidence to the bestower of its good; and the consciousness of yielding protection, like the divine source of all benevolence, fills the heart with a sweet tenderness towards its object.

With all this in his thoughts, Louis allowed prudence to put his wishes to silence; and he left it to accident, to inform him of the health or indisposition of them he had preserved.

His official duty of this morning passed with a deputation from the Austrian merchants of Ostend. He had received his father's commands, to hold a conference with those gentlemen respecting the sanction which the Spanish monarch had been called upon to grant to their Indian trade, to the certain umbrage of the mercantile interests of Great Britain and of Holland. The Emperor had insisted on this guarantee of Spain; and the Queen, with her usual impatience, ordered it to be accorded, without reserve. But Ripperda, when he yielded to the temporary necessity, guarded this cession, with a clause in the privileges, to which Charles, as well as the merchants, continued to object. To know the result of the Spanish minister's further deliberation, was the cause of their present embassy.

When Louis had discussed the affair with the merchants, their president retired with the young negotiator, to sign, in the name of the company, several papers, which Ripperda had left for that purpose. Louis and he were then alone. When the merchant had endorsed the deeds, he took two caskets of different sizes from under his vest. He unclasped them, and laid them open on the table. They contained unset jewels, of a value that seemed incalculable.

"These, my lord," said he, "are poor tributes, of the high consideration in which we hold the able conduct of the Duke de Ripperda, and of his secretary of legation, in this troublesome affair. I am empowered by my colleagues, to say, that the larger casket is worth 30,000*l.*, and the lesser, 20,000*l.* But, were they millions, they would be inadequate to repay our boundless obligations to the ambassador of Spain;—and, on the renewal of our guarantee, every seven years, we will give the same."

This kind of gratitude was so little foreseen by the Duke de Ripperda, he had not given his son any directions respecting it. Louis did not feel that he required any: it was not the gratitude that softened and subdued his heart. He closed the caskets, and putting them back into the hands of the merchant,—"Sir," said he, "the ambassador of Spain, and his secretary, are sufficiently repaid for the discharge of their duties to their country, and to the world in general, by the approbation and prosperity of those they serve. Rewards of any other kind, they cannot accept, as they neither understand nor value them."

The dignity with which Louis said this, as he laid the implied bribe from his hand, struck the president for a moment speechless; but, hastily recovering himself, he held the caskets forth a second time, and was opening his lips to enforce their acceptance, when Louis, rather haughtily, as well as sternly, put out his arm, with a repelling motion, and interrupted him. In that moment Orendayn entered the apartment, to pass through. Seeing it occupied, he apologised, and retreated; though not so fast, but his sordid eye caught a view of the diamonds.

Louis resumed. "Sir," said he, "do not irrecoverably offend the son of the Duke de Ripperda, by showing him that you have mistaken his father! Should he, or I, have influence in these affairs, when the guarantee is to be renewed, we must forget, that we have heard of, or seen these caskets, before we can put our hands to a second grant. You will excuse me, sir, if I now withdraw."

With the word, he bowed and left him. The confused merchant gathered up his caskets, and his charter, and, with the air of a culprit, stole out of the room.

At the usual hour of stirring abroad, Louis bent his course to the Princess de Waradin's, to enquire of her health after the late alarm. As he drove along, he passed the crowded ruins of the Opera House, now lying in a smoking mass of stone and smouldering timber. He shuddered to think, but for his perseverance, the amiable boy, whom he had seen in his mother's arms, would have been left a helpless orphan; and the lovely mother, who had led him to behold her son as he slept, at this moment a blackened corse under the steaming pile before him. That he had been instrumental in saving two fellow-creatures from so horrible a death, dilated his bosom with awful gratitude; and, when he alighted at the house of the Princess de Waradin, he sympathised with unaffected piety, in her thanksgivings to Heaven, for the escape of herself and her daughter.

Amelia was indisposed, and in her chamber. Her mother did not lose the opportunity of enforcing upon Louis, her daughter's conviction, that she owed the preservation of her life to him. He combated the idea with frank eagerness, showing the little share he had in the exertions, in which so many had assisted. But it was useless for him to disqualify those claims on her gratitude she was determined to think he possessed; and, insinuating that Amelia alone could repay them, he felt more embarrassed than gratified with her flattering pertinacity.

The views which the Princess de Waradin had upon Louis, made her use every maternal art to domesticate him in her family; but the gay vortex, into which he was plunged, rendered that impossible. Every house of con-

sequence in Vienna was open to him; and, in all, he found different orders of amusement, according to the character of the several sets. Though the rank of these circles might be on the same level, yet, the component parts, by an involuntary attraction, formed themselves into distinct societies; according to their different degrees of constitutional vivacity, mental qualifications, or hereditary prejudices. In some, he was wearied by everlasting state ceremonies, and the stiffness and stupidity inseparable from a superstitious regard to formalities; in others, he was entertained, interested, or disgusted, in proportion as he met with amiable manners, personal kindness, or riotous excess.

To kill time, seemed the great purpose of the world to which he was now introduced. Whether he dined with statesmen, with military, or with philosophers, though the conversation at table might be to his soul's content; of "battles fought, and glory won;" of the "Gordian knot" of policy; or the high-reaching thoughts of men, who analyse the universe;—still the evening ended the same. Some went to one place, some to another; and most, alas! to scenes of dissipation, against which his accustomed habits revolted. However, he remembered his father's advice, "to wear his own superiority meekly!"

The gambling table, the board spread to excess, the smiles of the meretricious beauty, all were found, in the scenes to which his new acquaintance introduced him. He thought, "If of such stuff be the pleasures of young men, their best hours devoted to their lowest passions! it is well they are dissipations of mind, as well as of time; else, how could reflection bear the retrospect? It is a disordered state of being, in which nothing is seen, felt, or heard, but through the medium of delirium. I cannot mingle with it! I cannot make this sacrifice of my life and feelings; even to comply with the wishes of my father."

He wrote to Ripperda to this effect. But the answer he received would not permit him to withdraw. The Duke told him that he was called upon to know, and to act with mankind; and how could he do either, if he only saw

them at their hours of form? He must attend them, in the undress of their minds, when the passions unveiled their hearts. There would then be no need of a window in the bosom, to understand how each man might be stimulated or restrained. With regard to Louis's own situation, in this crucible of character, as he felt disgust at what was temptation to others, he ought more readily to submit himself to the apparent trial.

"You have genius, and distinction, sufficient, already," added Ripperda, "to create jealousy enough. If you possess a mind, above the common recreations of man, let that be, I repeat, to the private satisfaction of your own heart; it will keep your judgment cool, and your proceedings independent. But, while you act with men, and would incline them to your purpose, you must appear to partake their nature. Let me hear, when I return, that you go wherever you are invited. Your companions will be too much absorbed in their own pursuits, to mark whether you are an actor or a spectator; but go with them."

Louis compared these principles with that of Wharton, — "*I mingle with the drossy earth, to extract its gold!*" They were the same; they were specious to the adventurous virtue of youth: and, finding his partiality to the English Duke strengthened by this sympathy in maxim with his father, Louis more readily determined to struggle against the delicacy of his taste, and to pass through things, so discordant to him, with sealed ears and eyes. But, the old proverb is true: "You shall not touch pitch without being defiled."

During the lengthened absence of Ripperda, which was prolonged by the Emperor much beyond the time he proposed, Louis saw all that a luxurious capital could present to the seduction of youth and affluence. There were circles of dissipation, of a higher class than those to which he had first been introduced; and these were at the houses of a class of nobility who lived to pleasure alone. If vice were there, she was arrayed by the graces; with splendour and softness, sophistries and flatteries, to make man forget he was mortal; or had aught to do in life, but to sail with its fabling syrens down the silver sea of time. No voice of

sorrow was ever heard in its air; no sigh of care ever breathed on its flowery shores; no tear ever dimmed the eternal lustre of that sky. Human nature's curse, of travail and woe; man's distresses, or sympathy with pain; were all here excluded. The blest inhabitants lived for themselves alone; and all was revelry, from the rising to the setting sun; from moonlight to the morning star. But Louis still found no satisfaction. The bosoms that panted there, beat with animal life alone. Such had no talisman for him.

Often, as he passed through the crowded chambers, in which his spirit felt a happy solitude, the conversations of Lindisfarne occurred to him; and he leaned, pensively, against many a rose wreathed arcade, musing on the prophetic lessons of his earliest friend.

All around was prosperity and enjoyment; but he recollected, that his uncle had said, "Sweet are the uses of adversity!" Bitter to the taste, but aromatic in effect, they preserve nature from corruption. Man, in the indolence of repletion, breaks out with infinite disorders. Like the ocean, the constant motion of which keeps its waters pure, he requires exercise of mind and body. If the natural stimulus be not to good, it will be to evil: what lies between is stagnation; and its effects we know. Unchanging prosperity cloys by possession, and the sated spirit looks around for new excitements. It is then that the passions wander abroad, and are easily tempted to forbidden paths. The Pastor of Lindisfarne had once paused on a page of Shakspeare, which Louis was reading to his cousins: —

> "Yet mark'd I *where* the bolt of *Cupid* fell!
> It fell upon a little western flower;
> Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound;
> And maidens call it *Love in Idleness.*"

"Not love, my children;" cried the venerable instructor; "love was bestowed by Heaven, to be a help-mate to our labours. Shakspeare means wantonness; that is the offspring of idleness. But the *son of the bondswoman* arrays himself like the *heir of promise;* and the sons and daughters of earth, are, awhile, mocked by his pretensions!"

When Louis saw this scene performed before him, he thought how melancholy it was to behold the cheat; how wretched, to see the blessings of life transformed to its bane. To view men and women, of rank and talents, and abundant power to become the benefactors and examples of mankind, immerse all in one broad system of selfishness; till a dangerous delusion spread over every faculty, and the character exhibit one mass of sentimental weakness, intemperate passions, splendid follies, and hardened vice!

In many of these parties Louis met Duke Wharton; but he never stayed more than a few minutes; though those few were hailed by an adulation that might have detained a prouder spirit. He ever left sighs behind; and Louis shared the regret; though still his friend passed him by unheeding; except, sometimes by a smile from a distance, or a glance of the eye, as they mingled in the crowd.

By a similar worldless communion, Louis found the impression he had made on the Electress was not effaced. In riding through the Prato, he often met her carriage; and she always leaned forward, with looks he could not mistake; and when she thought herself unobserved, she kissed her hand to him, with all the eagerness of suppressed, but ardent gratitude. He generally gazed wistfully after her carriage; for the image of Wharton united with her idea. He was her counsellor, her friend! How great must be her qualities to have secured such a distinction! Louis would not believe that she could have been privy to the murderous policy of some of her agents: he had seen enough, in his last interview, to excite his fancy to complete the flattering picture; and, where his imagination kindled, his heart was too apt to glow. Indeed, by this time, gratefulness and enthusiasm had left nothing in his memory of Wharton, but that he was the most generous and calumniated of men.

Things were in this state, when the Imperial family, and with them the Duke de Ripperda, arrived suddenly from the country. As soon as he alighted at his own house, Louis flew to welcome him.

"Follow me," replied the Duke.

Louis saw a contraction on his father's brow, which he

noted as the herald of disagreeable tidings; yet he did not linger to obey. They entered the saloon.

"I see, you anticipate what I have to say!" said the Duke. "The Empress is resolved on your marrying her favourite."

Louis was, momentarily, shocked by this announcement; but, rallying himself, with the hope that he had offended Otteline past forgiveness, he answered; "Could I be weak enough to second the Empress's wishes, after what passed between me and Countess Altheim, in our last conference, she must reject me."

"If she loved you, she would. But, as it is all one to her, by what means she ascends to distinction; she cares not, whether it be on your heart, or over her own delicacy. The Empress, too, forgets her own consequence, in eagerness to aggrandise her favourite. She protests, that you have given Otteline every proof of attachment; that circumstances demanded it; and that your honour is pledged to redeem the reputation she has lost on your account."

As his father recapitulated her patroness's discourse, in which, more earnest than judicious, she allowed too much of the selfish aim, in the views of her friend, to be seen, the entire remains of Louis's infatuation (which still lurked in the shape of pity) passed away like a mist; and, with faculties, at once cleared from every suggestion of vanity or of tenderness, he strongly declared, that he never would marry Countess Altheim. He allowed, that he had shown too many signs of headlong passion; but, he repeated, in his extremest phrensy, he had warned her, that he was at his father's disposal alone: and, for her reputation being sacrificed, that could be no longer an argument, since the object of his visits to the Empress need only be avowed, sufficiently to confute the slander grounded on them.

"It must not be avowed, that your discovered visits to these apartments were to the Empress. The Emperor knows, that you negotiated with Sinzendorff; but, am I to remind you, that should he ever suspect her private interference in the affair, his latent jealousy would find its object; and the consequence I need not repeat."

"Then," exclaimed Louis, in a sudden agony of spirit, "I am lost!"

"Not if your father can extricate you," returned the Duke; "but I fear you must marry her."

Though Louis's heart had just told him the same, the words uttered by his father were like a death-stroke; and, knocking his clenched hand upon his breast, he groaned aloud.

"De Montemar!" said the Duke, "does not the spirit, you so devoutly dedicated to glory — does it not suggest a way to perform this hard act of duty to your country; and, yet, not allow its disagreeable consequence to trouble you beyond the present hour?"

"Impossible!" returned Louis; in marrying the Countess Altheim, I shall marry my disgrace and all its consequences."

"Not disgrace," replied his father; "the affair must pass, as the natural effect of headstrong passion; — or, a little more in your own way, as an act of romantic justice, to the woman who has incurred dishonour for your sake. Passion always finds its apology with men; so the world may smile, but it will forgive you; and, when she is your wife ——"

"My wife! never, never!" interrupted Louis; "my name shall never be rendered infamous, by giving the world to suppose, that it was possible for me to make her my wife, whom even her future husband could persuade from virtue. How could the Empress sully her matron lips with the vile suggestion? I never dishonoured the Countess Altheim, in word nor deed; and I will not act as if I had been such a villain. I will not brand myself as a seducer, a dupe, or a madman! One of these three he must be, who unites himself to the reputation she has incurred, by her own arts and follies alone!"

The Duke permitted him to exhaust himself, and then again spoke.

Equally averse with Louis, to his son's union with the mere minion of any crowned head, he was aware, that open opposition in this instance would embarrass all his other objects. The Queen of Spain's fury against France,

and her eagerness for revenge, had put the Spanish interest totally into the power of the Empress. In Isabella's first rage, she had written a letter to Elizabeth, of such unguarded relinquishment, that Ripperda attempted to qualify it in vain. The Empress saw the advantage Isabella had yielded; and, in spite of her friend's representations, she maintained it in the amplest sense. Spain had, therefore, by the fury of its Queen, given up all check upon the non-execution of the most momentous articles in the treaty. She soon found the effects of her rashness; and, in letters of despair to Ripperda, acknowledged that it now wholly depended on his fidelity and contrivance, whether Austria should fulfil its engagements, or the business end in loss and disgrace.

Elizabeth had surprised the Duke, by suddenly raising two or three obstacles, as if preparatory to one disappointment at least. He marked her manner, which had become strangely captious to himself; but a subsequent conference cleared the mystery; and he more than foresaw the vexatious delays she would throw in the way of the execution of the treaty, should he appear to thwart her wishes with regard to his son, and her infatuation for her favourite.

When the Empress arrived from Baden at the Laxemburg, it was not long before she sent for Ripperda, to her private cabinet; and abruptly proposed to him the immediate marriage of Louis with her friend. The Duke was not, then, aware how much her Majesty had this object at heart. But, when he attempted to give his reasons against his son marrying at so early an age, she turned on him, with a look and demeanour more like that with which Catherine de Medicis repelled the insinuations of Cardinal Mazarin, for a marriage between his niece and the King, than the familiar confidence with which Elizabeth had always regarded the Duke de Ripperda. Ripperda understood her suspicion, and her scorn; and, had he not possessed a political self-command, equal to his towering pride, the reply of his eyes, and his voice, would at that moment have severed a friendship, which had lasted eighteen years; and dashed to atoms the present vaunted fabric of peace to Europe, for succeeding gener-

ations. He affected not to observe the air with which she uttered these, otherwise, innoxious words.

"Your son is old enough to be the colleague of politicians; and, surely, he is not too young to be the protector of an amiable and tender woman, whose only strength lay in my love and her spotless name. The last, she has lost through his handsome face, her fidelity to me, and the malignity of the Electress of Bavaria; and my love, and his honour, must and shall restore, what he and I have destroyed!"

In short, she gave him to understand more than had ever passed between Otteline and his son; but sufficient to convince him, that she considered Louis bound beyond release; and that his attached mistress was so assured of the same, there was nothing on the earth could induce her to withdraw her claim.

Elizabeth accused Louis of cold, dissembling vanity; treated with disdain the high principles which had impelled his rejection of her friend; and added, that she should influence the Emperor not to permit the reversionary investiture of Don Carlos, into the possession of the Italian dukedoms, to take place on the person of Louis, till Otteline should appear at the ceremony as Marchioness de Montemar.

After this insinuation, Ripperda saw there was no resource, but to dissimulate, and gain time. But, knowing the sincerity of his son, in all his transactions; when he called him to this interview, he thought it necessary to alarm his delicacy, and his honour, to induce him to embrace, without consideration, any prospect of escape from so disreputable a union. The Duke, therefore, spared no point in his narrative to Louis. Various and indignant were the interruptions he gave to the recital. The base exaggerations of Otteline, in her representations to the Empress of his conduct, and his own desperate entanglement with her, wrought him almost to phrensy.

The Duke, owned, that, as circumstances were, there was a necessity for the marriage; or, at least, an appearance of preparing for its celebration. Should events compel the ceremony, Louis might extricate himself from its domestic

discomforts, as soon as the affairs between the two countries were brought to a happy consummation. He might then leave his bride, and never see her more; being well assured, that she would be fully satisfied in the enjoyment of her new rank, by the side of her infatuated mistress. But this was taking the case at the worst; for, could they mislead the Empress, and her favourite, by apparent compliance, and real delays, in the performance, events might start forward to elude the whole.

"I cannot, sir," cried Louis, "I cannot compromise myself, one moment, on so abhorrent a subject! How could I look up, if I were to be pointed at, wherever I move, as the future husband of this justly contemned widow of Count Altheim? My lord, command me in every thing but this! Send me from Vienna, — banish me where you will; but do not entangle me further with that insidious woman! Do not subject me to the consciousness, that I am any way deserving the punishment of being ensnared, beyond the power of extrication."

"Louis," replied the Duke, "there is nothing, that I can command, or counsel you to do, to unite the preservation of your private freedom, with your public duty, but a temporary system of deceiving the Empress and her favourite. When you entered a political career, you engaged, on oath, to sacrifice every thing; your bosom's passions, and even your reputation with men, to the service of your country, should it be demanded! You are now called upon to perform the first part of this vow."

"Yes, sir; but I did not engage to sacrifice my conscience. That belongs to God alone; and I will perish, or keep it so."

"Then you must marry the Countess Altheim," calmly rejoined his father.

"In the hour that I do," replied Louis, "I shall have given my heart's dearest blood to the country I have never seen! to the country I will never see! I will abjure the world; and retire to die, a despised wretch, where I may not hear the derision I have plucked upon the name of De Montemar."

"And will that be obedience to your conscience?"

asked the Duke: "if so, mark its inconsistency; and sometimes doubt its text. Before I quitted the Empress, I brought her to apologise to me, for the offensive innuendos she had dropped at the beginning. I brought her to tears, when I reminded her, how I had served her and her daughter in the establishment of the pragmatic sanction. But, before I accomplished this conquest over a self-willed and powerful sovereign, I removed every impression from her mind, that I had any other objection to the proposed union, than your youth, and the lady being so much your senior. In the moment of reconciliation I prepared your path. I alleged, that my duty towards my new country obliged me to write thither, to ask pemission of the King and Queen of Spain, to form a foreign alliance, before I could formally give my consent. In this the Empress acquiesced. Here, then, is one delay secured. Meanwhile, should you appear to concur heartily in the arrangement, I have little doubt of winning upon Elizabeth, to grant the investiture before the messenger can return: the engine will then be restored to our own hand; and we may protract, and excuse, and finally break away, without danger."

"No, sir," replied Louis; "the cause of my abhorrence to this marriage was the want of all honourable principle, in the woman who had infatuated me; and I never will move one step to avoid it, by becoming the thing I abhor. If my liberty is only to be regained by acting a falsehood! — a treacherous falsehood! I submit to my cruel destiny, and I will marry her."

"That is to yourself alone," replied the Duke, rising from his chair with a disturbed and even a severe countenance. "But, remember, it is your duty to await the return of my messenger from Spain."

"I will wait, my father, as long as you please. But, I repeat, it is with no purpose to deceive. If I ever appear again in the presence of the Countess Altheim, to permit her to consider me as her future husband, it must be with the intention on my part, to become so at the prescribed time. My weak vassalage to beauty has brought me to this, and heavy will be the punishment; but it is more tolerable than my own utter contempt."

"You must visit her this evening."

"Not alone, my lord! That never shall be exacted from me. Till she bears my name, no power shall compel me to be alone with her!"

"Who, then, must be your companion? I cannot."

"Tell the Empress, I demand it of her tenderness for the Countess's honour, that some person be always present when we meet. Should I ever find it otherwise, in that instant I will withdraw."

"In that you are right," replied his father, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ELIZABETH'S reply to Ripperda's note, respecting the delicate scruple of his son, told him that herself would be present at the scene of reconciliation.

To go to this portentous interview was, to Louis, like setting forth to execution. A curtain seemed to have dropped between him and all the world. It closed out not only every domestic comfort, but every aim of ambition. Fame was now robbed of its glory; and the ardour of pursuit turned into a joyless resolve of fulfilling his task, from a sense of duty alone. His heart felt like a petrifaction in his breast; his veins were chilled; and, with a cloud over every faculty, he paced his way, as a man in a dream, through the often-trod, but now hateful galleries of the Imperial palace. He knew not how his faltering steps bore him into the *boudoir*, where he expected to see Otteline; but, instead of her pleading or resentful form, he found himself in the august presence of the Empress.

She advanced to meet him, all smiles; but what her first words were he knew not. She observed his pale looks, and the distracted wandering of his eyes; but she would not notice either.

"Whatever was your quarrel with Otteline in your last meeting," continued she, "her gentle spirit is ready to grant you forgiveness. Shall I conduct you to her feet?"

"To her presence, madam," replied Louis, recalling his attention: "I shall be honoured in following your Majesty; but not to her feet. I cannot ask her forgiveness for addressing her with candour."

Elizabeth looked sternly at him.

"Young man, you are not come here to brave the Empress of Germany! Beware, Louis de Montemar, of insulting my friend, beyond even her persuasions to pardon!"

"I come to speak the truth," replied he,—"to declare that I am ready to fulfil every claim that Countess Altheim demands of my honour; but also to throw myself on your Majesty's justice to me and tenderness for her, by a frank avowal that I shall contract this marriage against my heart; and against my conviction, that my honour does not acknowledge the pledge she asserts."

The Empress remained indignantly silent, while he briefly recapitulated the cause of his repugnance to the union she was determined to accomplish.

"It is as impossible for me to restore her to my esteem," added he, "as to relinquish my nature. But if, under the circumstances I have mentioned, your Majesty deems me bound where no engagement was made, and when I have already told her that our hearts are as separated as our natures, I am ready to submit to become her husband, with the cold, soul-less duty, the name may enforce."

Louis stood firm, though pale and respectful, before the resentful gaze of Elizabeth.

"Sir," said she, "you know how to insult; and you know how to attempt to wrest from a tender woman the rights you have given her over your honour. But I am her protectress, and shall hold the chain that binds you, until death severs it."

Louis bowed, with his hand upon his breast; but the indignation that was there could not be hidden,—the Empress saw it in the proud flash of his eyes: despair, and a passion even less familiar to his nature, was in that glance. Elizabeth thought she understood it.

"Young man," cried she, "I know more of that vain heart than I can easily pardon. For another's sake, I

may; and yet you dare to tell me that your honour made no engagement with Countess Altheim, because you did not say, in veritable words, *I offer you my heart, my hand, my fortune, and my life.* But, did you not weep on her hand? Did you not press it to that faithless breast, while you vowed you loved, adored, and lived only in her smile? Did you not proffer her your life to clear her aspersed fame? Did you not pledge her your heart? Were you not sensible that you are master of hers? And what is all this but a bond to be hers, — a pledge that you are hers? What is *honour*, if it be only a word, and not an action, and, in this case, an interchange of soul for soul? All this has passed between you, and yet you talk of your honour being your own!"

Louis stood impressed, but not confounded by the truths in this appeal. While he felt the reproach to many of his sex, he might have said with Hamlet,

"Let the galled jade wince; my withers are unwrung!"

Elizabeth observed a change in his countenance; and, with all the woman in her Imperial heart, she exclaimed, "Oh, man, man!" But, checking herself from completing the apostrophe, she turned proudly away, and walked up the room. She returned, and addressed him.

"I have condescended to argue thus with you, because you are the son of the Duke de Ripperda. His unswerving probity disdains subterfuge. Act as becomes his son, and I may forget what Otteline is too ready to pardon."

Louis looked up. The noble candour in his eyes almost dazzled the steadfast, doubting gaze of Elizabeth.

"Had I sought a subterfuge," replied he, "I should have merited the utmost of your Majesty's disdain; but, from the first moment that I found myself too sensible to her charms, I struggled against the disclosure; and, when circumstances extorted the confession from me, with the declaration of my love, I also declared that I was not at my own disposal. These reproaches do not, then, hold on me; for, had she still appeared what I then supposed her, had my father refused his consent, I would have proved my fidelity by never giving my hand to any other woman."

"Your father gives his consent," answered the Empress, "and, as you yield obedience to his commands, it is well they coincide with the bonds of your honour. I accept, for my friend, your offered terms, — your hand, with the consideration due to a wife. For know, vain boy, that Otteline has a spirit as dignified as it is tender, and will not brook obloquy either from her lover, the world, or her husband!"

Louis would have spoken, but she put out her hand in sign of silence.

"Follow me, Marquis," cried she; "and the consequences of the next two hours be on your own head!"

The consequences he already felt in his heart; and, without further look of remonstrance, or attempt to utter another word, he bowed, and obeyed.

She opened a door in the farthest apartment, and discovered the beautiful favourite, seated on a sofa, awaiting them. She was luxuriant in every charm; and, perhaps, the flush of a smothered resentment irradiated her complexion with redoubled brilliancy. But all was worse than lost upon the senses of Louis. Every beauty appeared to him like the serpents on the Gorgon's head, — wreathing to sting him. She rose as the Empress entered.

"Otteline," cried her Majesty, "I have brought you a penitent. Can you pardon, and receive him to your heart?"

"Oh, Wharton!" exclaimed the inmost soul of Louis, "this *Semiramis*, and her *subtle confidante*, have indeed coiled me unto death!"

As he approached, the Countess made some answer, which he rather knew by tones than words, and almost instantly Elizabeth put the hand of Otteline into his. He held it; but it was without pressure, — without recognisance of the delight with which he once had grasped it.

"Now," continued the Empress, "I am happy, since I see the son of my earliest counsellor thus affiance himself to the cherished friend of my youth."

As she spoke, she pressed their hands together; while a mortal coldness shot through the heart of Louis, at this consummation of his fate: stupified and abstracted, he

neither saw nor heard for a few moments. In this interval the Empress disappeared. Otteline sunk, weeping, into a chair. He turned his eyes upon her; but no sympathy was in their beams,—no belief in the semblance of her tears. She looked up, and met his rigid observation. Her beautiful eyes swam, like sapphire gems in the summer dew. A soft attraction was in their lucid rays. A melancholy smile gave utterance to her faltering accents; and, holding out the hand he had dropped, she gently, timidly, and tenderly articulated,—

"De Montemar! Is it a mutual forgiveness? The hand that is now yours is a feeble pledge of the reconciliation of my heart!"

Louis did not approach her. He felt there was poison in that honeyed tongue; and, though he came to commit himself to her for ever, he shrunk from being cozened again by her charms, or her art, to become a willing sacrifice. Could he now unite himself to her from any other impulse than hard, extorting duty, how deep would be his degradation to himself! He looked down, to shut all these witcheries from his eyes.

After a minute's pause, while he stood painfully silent, she resumed, in great emotion.

"What is it I have done, to deserve this harsh contempt? Oh, De Montemar! I have only proved myself a fond, a feeble woman! For your sake, I gave way to the suggestions of a zeal that would have carried me as surely on the points of your enemies' daggers, as to violate the letter which gave notice of your danger: and thus am I repaid!"

With a suffocating gasp she fell back into the chair on which she sat. Her whole frame was shook, as if life were passing in agonising throes from her body. The heart of man could not bear this. Could these mortal struggles be indeed dissimulation? Whatever they might be, he could not look on them unmoved. He hastily approached her, and touched her hand. It was cold as death; but the plastic fingers closed on his agitated pressure. He trembled fearfully, as he drew that hand from her pale face, and beheld those matchless features convulsed with mental

agony. Again her eyes opened upon him, as he hung over her. They fixed themselves on his face, with a languid but pleading sorrow.

"Countess," said he.

"Oh, call me Otteline,— your Otteline!" cried she, impetuously grasping his arm, and hiding her face on it; "or repeat that word, and release me by killing me! But I have survived your esteem, and why should I longer wish to live?"

His heart was subdued; and, with tears starting from his own eyes, he exclaimed, "And is it possible that you do really love me?"

In that moment she was on her knees beside him. She clasped her hands; and looked up, with such beaming beauty in every feature, such effulgence in her dewy eyes, that his were riveted on her as they would have been on a kneeling angel. Her lips appeared, vainly, to attempt sounds; and, finding them impracticable, she turned towards him, and, meeting the relenting expression of his countenance, smiled like heaven, and threw herself upon his breast.

Louis's heart heaved and panted under the beautiful burden it sustained; but, even in that moment of female victory, the excess of his emotion smote on that betrayed heart. Sensible to all the shame of his defeat, the rapid current chilled to its former ice; and, with a tremor far from ecstasy, he replaced her in her chair, and almost unconsciously knelt down by her side. But the attitude was dictated by an humbled sense of his own weakness, — not, indeed, addressed to her, though he now believed she loved him; and, while he looked on her agitated frame, he said inwardly,—

"If I cannot be happy myself, in the degradation to which I am doomed, at least I do not leave you miserable. I will cherish and protect; and, perhaps, recal that fond heart to respect the principles of your husband!"

As he thus thought, he raised her hand to his lips; and, by that action, sealed to himself the compact to be hers.

"My De Montemar!" murmured the Countess, feeling

the import of this mute symbol. At this crisis she looked up, and beheld the young Archduchess, pale and fixed, in the middle of the floor, with her eyes riveted on the kneeling figure of Louis.

"The Princess!" exclaimed Otteline, in a voice of surprise, to Louis.

He started from his knee, and, in the confusion of his feelings, retreated a few paces back. The gentle Maria-Theresa smiled mournfully, but did not speak. Taking her hand, the Countess enquired her commands. The Princess still kept her eyes fixed on Louis, while in a suppressed and unsteady voice she answered her governess.

"My mother wishes to speak with you. But, perhaps, had she known the Marquis was here, she would not desire you to leave him. God bless you, Marquis!" cried she, addressing him with agitated earnestness: "be kind to my Otteline; for, when you are married, I shall never see her more."

With the last words she tore her eyes from his face, and threw herself into the bosom of the Countess. Otteline looked her adieu to her lover, as, in a tumult of undescribable disorder, he hurried out of the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Though Ripperda had made it a point with the Empress, that there should be no public intimation given of the proposed marriage of her favourite with his son, until the Queen's consent should arrive, it is probable her Majesty might have sent it abroad by a private whisper, had she not seen the prudence of not stimulating the ill offices of the Princess de Waradin, and others, by any hint that the heir they courted for their daughters was promised to their proudest enemy.

When Elizabeth appeared to grant this silence as a favour, she insisted that it should not deter Louis from

making his daily visits at the Altheim apartments; it was a respect due to the amiable forbearance of his future bride; and it should be in the presence of one of her ladies, who was also a friend of the Countess.

Louis had now abandoned himself to his fate. But he had hardly given full sway to compulsive duty, and to the pleasing credulity that was re-awakened by compassion, before a thousand circumstances arose to bid all his former repugnance return. The veil of imagination had been too forcibly rent from his eyes, ever to pass again between him and the object of his past idolatry. Unblinded by its delusions, every succeeding day showed him clearer views of a character, she vainly sought to disguise in assumed sentiment and delicacy. He perceived that her defects were not merely those of a perverting education, but of a radically warped mind. She had no spontaneous taste for moral greatness. Grandeur was her object; but it was that of station. Still, however, she loved him! loved him with a fondness, a bewitching fascination, that, at times, made him almost forget she was not the perfection that might have been the mistress of his soul. The beautiful deception never lasted many minutes; and his heart sighed for its partner, with a forlorn consciousness, that spoke of desolation, and dreariness, and solitude, through the whole of his after-life.

In moments like these, how often has a frequent quotation of his Pastor uncle's occurred to him! "He that does a base thing in zeal for his friend, burns the golden thread that ties their hearts together. Such proof of love is conspiracy, not friendship!"

In the midst of this banishment from hope, of ever knowing the sweets of domestic comfort again, he received large packets from the dear home where his best instructor presided, and where perfect happiness dwelt with humility and innocence. The counsel of the venerable man strengthened him in every disinterested rule of life; but the letters of his aunt and cousins made his yearning heart overflow with rebellious regrets. The spirit of virtue and of tenderness breathed through every eloquent line that dropped from the pen of Cornelia.

"Ah, sister of my soul!" cried he, "I could fly with thee into the bosom of paradise! Here is all celestial purity, all divine aspirations! and I wished to wander from such a heaven! I longed to busy myself in the ambitious turmoil of the world! I am in that world, and what is my achievement? I find myself chained to the foot of a woman, my noble Cornelia would despise! How dare I confess to them, who love and honour me, so degrading a disappointment of their hopes?"

He turned to the soothing gratitude of his sweet Alice, breathed in a letter which had been wet with her tears. Don Ferdinand had complied with her petition. He had written to her mother, and avowed his love; but throwing himself upon her pity, he implored her not to betray him to his father; while to assure her that he meant nothing disobedient to him, nor clandestine to her in the demand, he released Alice from every vow, only reserving one claim on her compassion,— to be allowed at some future day to throw himself at her feet, should the issue of certain circumstances, which still gave him the privilege to hope, hereafter induce his father to consent to his happiness.

Alice added, that her mother had written to Don Ferdinand, and to this effect: — She pardoned what had passed, in consideration of the amplitude of the restitution; she should preserve his blameless conduct from his father's eye, since it was repented of and relinquished; but he must not suppose by such indulgence she yielded any encouragement to the continuance of his attachment for her daughter, as she desired that here all correspondence must cease.

"But," added Alice, "I know he will be true to what he has written; and I know I shall always love him dearer for having taken that dreadful load from my heart. I am, therefore, quite sure I shall be content to await his father's consent, should it not come these many years. If you knew how happy I am, since I can lift up my eyes in my dear mother's presence, and no longer feel ashamed at being pressed to the bosom of my blameless sister, you would be as ready to pour as many tears of joy, over the welcome of the little strayed lamb, as your kind heart shed

floods of sorrow, that melancholy night, when you found her so sadly wandered from her fold! Oh, my Louis, shall my gratitude to you ever find words to express itself?"

Mrs. Coningsby's letter was not less energetic in thanks to her nephew, for the judicious advice he had given to her almost infant Alice, and for the activity of his exertions to bring it to effect.

Louis smiled with glistening eyes over these letters; for he was yet to learn the science of forgetting his own privations in the fulness of others. The comparison now only aggravated the pangs in his breast; and rising from meditations, that subdued, agitated, and maddened him, he rushed into crowds for that dissipation he vainly sought in the exercises of study, or the fulfilment of his official duties.

Count Koninseg had lately introduced him to a house in which he moved about at perfect ease; and met with every gratification to put his usual indifference to gay society to the test. It was the abode of the Count d'Ettrees, a French adventurer of rank, whose wife and sister formed an attraction of wit and beauty, that rivalled every other assembly in Vienna. Under their magic auspices, every amusement was presented that man could desire or devise; and all lavished with a splendour of luxury, an elegance of taste, and an affluence of expense, which must soon have been exhausted, had not the fountain, as it flowed, returned by another channel to its native bed. Count d'Ettrees drew a revenue from that spirit for play, which his display of means excited in his guests.

Louis could never be induced to touch a card or a dice-box, despising them both as sordid and senseless amusements; but he found ample entertainment in the conversations of, indeed, an epitomised world. In these assemblies he saw persons from all countries, and of all parties; but they were the chosen of all. So select was the Count in the rank and pretensions of his guests, it was deemed the highest proof of consequence, and of being *un bel esprit*, to be seen in this privileged circle. The Countess Claudine, and her sister-in-law, Angelique d'Ettrees, were, ostensibly, women of character, and, really, women of talent.

But while all around showed a gorgeous pageant of amusement, wit, and genius, ruin lurked in the rooms dedicated to play; infidelity and pride lay concealed in the philosophic colonnade; while poetry, Voltaire, Rousseau, and bewildering sentiment, discoursed with talent, or with beauty; and vice sapped the unwary footstep wherever it trod.

At present, Louis was too self-absorbed by the struggles within him, to look deep into what was passing around him. It was sufficient that the varying intellectual enjoyments of the place wrested him from his thoughts; and he gave himself up to all their power, with a desperate avidity. He found his mind roused and exercised by discussions with men of genius; he was delighted with the brilliant wit of the women, the graceful frankness of their manners; and, perhaps, he was unconsciously propitiated by the indirect flattery which was offered to himself by the Countess and her sister, and which, being paid to his talents alone, he received without suspicion.

One evening, while he was thus engaged, he observed De Patinos and Duke Wharton enter together. It was the first time he had seen the Duke in the Hôtel d'Ettrees. The Spaniard, at the same instant, descried Louis, as he sat between the Countess and her sister. De Patinos drew his arm from Wharton, and approached the group; but, when near, he stopped, and turned away, casting a furious look at Ma'm'selle d'Ettrees. She left her seat; and Louis, soon afterwards, saw her and the Spaniard in close conversation, while they, at times, glanced at him as if the object of their discourse. De Patinos seemed in great heat, and Angelique very earnest: they parted, with a sarcastic laugh from the Spaniard, and Ma'm'selle mingled with the crowd.

Without any known cause of offence, a tacit acknowledgment of mutual dislike was shown by Louis and De Patinos. For some time their civilities had been confined to a cold bow at meeting in the *Palais d'Espagne;* when they met elsewhere, they passed as strangers. Baptista Orendayn was De Patino's shadow in all things. But the conciliating manners of Louis, and (when he could emerge from his bosom regrets) his brilliant powers of amusement,

had won the other Spaniards to court his society, and regard him with more confidence. This desertion from his party stimulated the anger of De Patinos; and a lurid fire burnt in his haughty eye, whenever it encountered his admired rival.

As Louis left the side of the animated Countess d'Ettrees, and was passing from the rooms into a crowd of attendants, his shoulder pressed against that of Wharton; their eyes met. Louis snatched his friend's hand, and the embrace of his heart was felt. Wharton's luminous smile played on his lip, as he whispered,

"Socrates, or Alcibiades, De Montemar?"

Louis did not answer, for at that moment he encountered the glance of Orendayn. He bowed with obsequious lowliness, both to him and to the Duke, and passed on. Wharton and Louis had withdrawn their hands the instant they caught his eye; and the Duke turned into the circle. Louis was conscious, however, to having been observed; but whether with a malicious, or an indifferent observation, he did not pause to think on. Indeed, persons of all parties conversed so indiscriminately in this Elysian society, where nothing seemed considered, but the free enjoyment of all which was delightful in the human mind, that he saw nothing to apprehend, in the simple circumstance of having been known to speak to Duke Wharton in so privileged a scene. And, for any inferences, which the busy ignorance, or ill nature of Orendayn, might choose to draw, it could be a matter of no consequence; as most of the Spanish grandees in Ripperda's suite conversed openly with Wharton; and Orendayn, though a nobleman, was known to be a character of contemptible craft and falsehood.

Thus Louis continued to throw away the time that was once so precious to him. But it was no longer the friend, with which he joyed to take sweet counsel, and lay open a bosom, that knew no guests but hope and exultation. It was become a heavy monitor of remembrance; to remind him, in solitary hours, of the blank, his youthful infatuation, and hard destiny, had made of his present and future days. Misery was on one side; oblivion, with sweet solace,

on the other; and despair was at hand, to urge the leap between. His official duties done, his home saw him no more, till their recurrence recalled his steps, or the hour of rest demanded him to his pillow.

An hour, each morning, was passed in the Altheim apartments, where the Empress often met him, with unvarying graciousness; and Otteline received him with as stationary smiles. But the vesture of art cannot elude the penetration of every day. In spite of her vigilance, he became master of her secret; and, no longer deceived into self-complacency, by the idea that she loved him, he saw himself consigned to be the prey of frigid, unfeeling, circumventing ambition. From her he rushed to Princess de Waradin's; to his military associates; to the *Hôtel d'Ettrees;* to any vortex that would hurry him from himself; and present him with other meditations than Otteline, and his day of sanctioned infamy.

The Empress and Ripperda were now sailing forward on the unruffled sea of success. He had brought her to yield him such implicit confidence, that she exerted her own influence with the Emperor, to hasten the investiture of Don Carlos in the Duchies of Parma and Placentia. Charles promised that the official documents should immediately be finished; and the ceremony be performed with the earliest despatch. He put into the Duke's hand his final renunciation, for himself and his posterity, of all claims on the succession of Spain; and he gave him written bonds, for the payment, at certain seasons, of a large debt of many millions, owed by the empire to the Spanish monarchy. He also signed several new articles to the secret treaty; one of which relinquished the Netherlands to Don Carlos, as a dowry with his intended bride.

About this time, Cardinal Giovenozzo arrived from Rome, on a special mission from the Pope; and, with the usual caution of his Holiness, all opposing parties were to be conciliated. To this end, the Cardinal's first proceeding was to collect the foreign ambassadors, and the leading men of the different factions at Vienna, round his table.

At one of these entertainments, it chanced that the Duke

de Ripperda and the Duke of Wharton were placed at the same board. If there were any man in the world, whom Ripperda absolutely hated, it was this rival of his politics; and he hated him, because he was the only man who had ever effectively crossed them. But, while he cherished this hatred, he would not own to himself, that it was mixed with any fear of the talents he affected to despise. He, therefore, took no notice of the Duke at table, but by a stiff bow; and he would not even have granted that, had it not been at the board of the representative of the Father of Christendom, where such mutual recognition, of universal brotherhood in the Catholic church, was a regular ceremonial.

During dinner, some observations were made by Wharton, respecting the balance of power in Italy:—they extracted two or three angry flashes from the eye of Ripperda; but, disdaining to appear to attend to any thing advanced by him, he continued, with an air of indifference, drinking wine with the Russian ambassador, and conversing with the Cardinal, at whose right hand he sat. The animated Wharton proceeded in his remarks, at the end of the table he occupied; and, in a strain of argument, and of eloquence, that gradually attracted every ear. Even Giovenozzo himself bowed, without reply, to some passing observation of Ripperda; and bent forward, to catch what Wharton was asserting relative to the Pontiff's rights in the transfer of principalities in Italy.

This temporary triumph of the English Duke, over the imposing presence of Ripperda, stung him to the quick; and, for a moment, he laid open the wound, by the impatient scorn with which he glanced on the resistless speaker. The Portuguese minister, who sat next him, remarked on the powerful consequences of the last argument of Wharton. Ripperda contemptuously replied,

"Wind is sometimes mistaken for thunder."

Wharton caught the words, and, with a gay but pointed laugh, looked towards the top of the table.

"Jove wields both in his rod; and the lighter the stroke, the quicker the smart."

"When the bolt is launched against presumption," re-

torted Ripperda, "it harrows up a dirt that blinds the multitude."

Wharton smiled. "I have no ambition to be the glorious malefactor!"

And bowing to the Duke, the reference could not be mistaken. Some of the company did not repress the smile that fluttered on every lip. It was too much for the incensed pride of Ripperda; and starting from his chair, he turned indignantly to the Cardinal.

"When your Eminence understands the distinction between the accredited representative of the King of Spain, and the lurking emissary of a dethroned and mendicant sovereign, then the ambassador of his Catholic Majesty may appear where he is not to be insulted."

Every person had risen from their seats: and Giovenozzo, not the least alarmed of the party, seized the Duke's arm; and beginning a confused apology, for the attention he had paid to Wharton, even attempted an excuse for the English Duke himself.

"I beg your Eminence not to trouble yourself with my apology," cried the unruffled Wharton; — "I meant all I said. And, I am obliged to the candour of the Spanish ambassador, for so publicly declaring the distinction that is indeed between us! He is the representative of a king in the plenitude of power; and the stream flows bounteously! I am the lurking emissary of a dethroned and mendicant monarch! — but it has not yet been my good fortune to play the successful *Gaberlunzie* in the courts of rival sovereigns; nor to beg alms for my Prince at the gate of the Duke de Ripperda!"

Ripperda turned on him, with an eye of flame: and, at that moment insensible to every thing, but the expression of his burning hatred, he sternly exclaimed, —

"Were not Duke Wharton as impotent as he is vain, I might stoop to chastise, what offends me: but I pardon, what I pity."

"And I," replied the Duke, "am proud to imitate so great an example!"

Ripperda, almost beside himself with wrath, struck the hilt of his sword fiercely with his hand. Wharton turned

gaily on his heel, and asked some indifferent question of the Duke de Richelieu.

The Cardinal followed Ripperda out of the apartment. Alarmed at the consequence of suffering him, who seemed to hold the balance of Christendom in his hands, to quit his roof unappeased, Giovenozzo drew the enraged Duke into another room, and vainly tried to assuage his fury. Ripperda's pride was in arms, at being so insolently braved before all the nations of Europe, in the persons of their ambassadors. He had shown himself susceptible of insult from the man, it was his policy to teach others to despise! Chafed at this weakness, and in a disorder of mind he had never known before, he poured on the Cardinal all his resentments against the Duke and himself. He saw, that nothing could redeem him to the vantage ground he had so intemperately abandoned, but an ample and formal apology from Wharton: and he told Giovenozzo, he must force the English Duke to make that restitution; else he should act, from a conviction, that they had been invited together, to insult the politics of Spain in the person of its minister.

The Cardinal feared Ripperda; and flattered himself that he might work upon the zeal and good nature of Wharton, to serve the interest of his Holiness by this concession. When Ripperda arose to withdraw, on being informed that his carriage was ready, Giovenozzo attended him to the foot of the stairs, and absolutely promised to bring him the demanded apology next day.

But, unfortunately, the company in the dining-room, supposing that Ripperda had been some time gone, moved to depart also. In the hall, Wharton again met his proud antagonist; and, in the instant, when, most unhappily, the spirit of discord seemed to have extended itself to their respective domestics. Wharton's carriage, and that of Ripperda, had drawn up at the same moment; and their coachmen were disputing the right to maintain the door. From words they had recourse to whips.

"A comfortable way of settling a controversy!" exclaimed Wharton, stepping forward, to order his servant to draw off; — but Ripperda, who felt the late scene fes-

tering in his heart, supposing a different intention, and a new affront in the Duke's prompt advance, cried aloud, with an air of derision, — " Less haste, my lord! or the whip of my coachman may chance to brush your Grace's skirts!"

" If it did," replied Wharton, with a glance, that told he understood the remark, " I should know where to repay the impertinence."

Ripperda was again in a blaze.

" Insolent!" cried he.

Wharton, who had checked his steps, on the first word from his antagonist, now leaned towards him: and whispered, —

" The lion may be chafed beyond its bearing! It is possible for the father of Louis de Montemar to go too far with the Duke of Wharton!"

This assumption of forbearance, Ripperda felt as the climax of insult; and starting back, with all the resentments of his nature rushing through his veins, he touched the hilt of his sword, and in a subdued voice, replied, —

" If you do not shroud cowardice, under the name of my son, you will follow me!"

This had cleft the threatened cord; and, in one moment, the two Dukes had vanished through the colonnades of the hall, into an interior and lonely court of the building.

In the same instant, they found themselves alone; the drawn sword of Ripperda was in his hand, and he called on Wharton to defend himself. There was no time for further forbearance or parley. Wharton had hardly warded off the first thrust of his determined antagonist, before a second and a third were repeated, with the quickness of lightning. The glimmer of the lamps, which lit this little solitary quadrangle, marked each movement of the weapon, with a gleam on its polished steel; and Wharton continued rather to defend than attack. But a noise of approaching steps withdrawing his attention, for a moment, from his guard, a desperate lunge from the infuriate arm of his adversary, ran him through the breast, and he fell. The blood sprang over his hand, as he instinctively clasped it

on the wound. His proud destroyer stood confounded at the sight.

"I forgive you my death!" cried Wharton, "but I guess your son will not. Rash Duke, to you he dies in me!"

The tongue of Ripperda clove to the roof of his mouth; and, in the next instant, the Cardinal and the French ambassador appeared at his side. As the bloody scene presented itself, Giovenozzo shut the door, and bolted it behind him to prevent further entrance. Richelieu hurried to the prostrate Duke, and spoke to him. Wharton looked up, and in hardly articulate accents said, "Bear witness, Richelieu, that I acquit the Duke de Ripperda. He was in wrath, and I provoked him. Let not his high character be dishonoured by my death."

This was the first time, that Ripperda's lofty consciousness of consistent greatness had ever shrunk before the eye of man; he could not brook the strange humiliation; and, with asperity, he haughtily exclaimed,—"My honour does not require protection. I know, that I have been intemperate and rash. But, let the world know it as it is: I have done nothing that I am not prepared to defend."

Wharton raised himself on his arm to reply; but, in the exertion, he fainted and fell.

The Cardinal (in consternation at the report he must give to the Pope, of such an affray under his holy roof,) implored his implacable guest to pass into the oratory. It was only on the other side of the court; and he beseeched him to await him there, till the French ambassador and he had borne the insensible Wharton to a place where his state might be examined.

Ripperda complied in silence; and Giovenozzo, wrapping his scarlet scarf around the bleeding body of Wharton, between him and Richelieu, bore him round the back of the oratory, into one of the penitential cells. His Eminence, having been a brother of the Order of Mercy, understood surgery; and staunching the Duke's wound, so as to leave him for a short time in safety, though still insensible, he came forth with Richelieu. The French Duke gave him his word of honour, that if Ripperda could be induced to

keep silence, on this terrible affair, whether Wharton lived or died, the secret should never escape from him.

Richelieu had his own views in this secrecy; and took his part, to return to the hall, and quench suspicion there. They who had lingered to know the issue, with what degree of credence suited them, listened to his hasty account; — that he, and the Cardinal, had just arrived in time to laugh at their zeal; for Wharton had given a merry explanation of his ill-timed raillery to the Duke; laying it to the account of the Cardinal's bright Falernian; and Ripperda, with the dignity of a great mind, having accepted the apology, no more was said about it.

All appeared to believe this statement; for there was no disputing the *word of honour* of an ambassador! But there were a few drops of blood on the point ruffles and bosom of Richelieu; which, being observed by Count Routemberg alone, told him a different story; and he remained, a few minutes, behind the rest. When the hall was cleared of all, but himself and the French minister, he did not speak, but pointed significantly to the testimonies on the ruffles and frill. Richelieu was hurrying out some excuse, invented on the moment; but Routemberg (who was president of the Emperor's council) whispered something in the ambassador's ear. They both smiled, shook hands, and parted.

When Ripperda returned to his palace, he entered the room, where his son was completing some especial communications to Spain. Louis put them into the hand of his father. As he did so, he beheld that form and face which, a few hours before had left him gallantly habited, and bright in lofty complacency, now discomposed, pale, and haggard. He gazed on the alteration with surprise, while Ripperda seemed to read the despatch with a moveless eye.

"It will do," said he, laying it on the table. He mechanically took up one of the candles, and was turning away to his own chamber. Louis could keep silence no longer.

"You are ill, my lord!" cried he, "or something terrible has happened!"

"What is there terrible to have happened?" returned

Ripperda, pausing as he approached the door, and looking on his son.

"Nothing, that I can guess," replied Louis; "but your looks, my father, are not as when you left me!"

"How often have I told you, De Montemar," returned the Duke, "never to guess at a statesman's looks! I have come from a party of many wizards; and you must not be surprised that mine has changed in the contact. I am well; let that satisfy you."

With these words the Duke withdrew.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Morning reported all that had passed at the table of the Cardinal. What happened in the hall was slightly mentioned; for little of that had been generally heard; but an account was circulated, that notwithstanding the good offices of Giovenozzo had produced a show of reconciliation, some serious consequences might be anticipated.

When Ripperda entered to his son, the next day, he perceived, by his pallid hue and averted eyes, that he had heard something of the affray. Without preface, the Duke abruptly asked, what had been told him of Wharton's behaviour the preceding night. The informant of Louis had shaped the story under a flattering veil for his father; and the anxious son had heard nothing but of the insolence and scoffing speeches of the English Duke, and of the dignified forbearance of Ripperda.

The blood that accused his friend in his heart, rushed to his face, when he repeated what had been told him.

"And how," demanded Ripperda, "do you mean to act towards the man, who could so taunt, deride, and insult your father?"

"Though he twice preserved my life," returned Louis, "he has now wounded me in a more vital part: I shall ever regard him as a stranger."

Ripperda shook his head, and laid his hand on his son's arm. "And what would be your decision, were I to reverse the charge?"

Louis looked on the flushed countenance of his father.

"Human nature is fallible, Louis!" cried he; after thirty years of undeviating self-control ——" Ripperda broke off: — it was an acknowledgment, he believed his magnanimity called on him to make; but in the bitterness of his mortification, thrusting his son from him, he exclaimed, —"How must I hate the man who burst my fettered passions; and, for one desperate moment, made me their victim and his sport!"

Louis did not speak, in his astonishment at what, he hoped, would end in some acquittal of his friend; but the pleasurable feeling was quickly smothered by this tremendous burst from his father; and he saw, revived before him, the terrible moment in which the Sieur Ignatius had clenched his dagger at his breast. Without a word, or a look upward, he stood, awfully expecting him to proceed.

After a minute's pause, the Duke turned, desperately calm, to his son.

"Discredit the vile flatterers who would tell you that Wharton alone was the aggressor. We met like hostile bulls; and wonder not that we should plunge at once upon each other's horns! Respect him still, for he is a noble enemy; but I am his for ever."

Louis threw himself at his father's feet.

"My gracious father! Oh, that the visible pleadings of my heart, that its dearest blood, could make you regard him as a friend!"

There are hearts that cannot bend where they have injured. Ripperda's was of this proud metal; and looking down on his kneeling son, he exclaimed,—"Impossible! that has passed between us which has made our enmity eternal. Your conduct in the affair I leave to yourself. But I can trust to you, that you will not compromise your father's honour, by broadly showing fellowship with his most open enemy."

Louis pressed his father's hand to his lips; that hand which was hardly washed from Wharton's blood! But he

was ignorant of that part of the tale; and the Duke, in a milder voice, bade him rise.

"You will not, soon, be called to act the Roman part between your father and your friend!" continued he. "I saw Cardinal de Giovenozzo this morning; and he tells me that Wharton has disappeared."

This information was balm to Louis, as it seemed to promise a peaceful termination to so threatening an affair. That his friend had withdrawn was a pledge of his pacific wishes, and, with a lightened countenance, Louis rose from his knee.

Ripperda said no more, and his son was left to his meditations.

Whatever details he afterwards heard of the dispute were so confused and contradictory, he could form no certain criterion which was most to blame. But Giovenozzo at last put all to silence, by a declaration that he should deem all further discussion of a transaction which passed under his roof as an impertinent interference with his responsibility. He pronounced, that neither the Duke de Ripperda, nor the Duke of Wharton, could have acted otherwise than they did, consistently with their own dignities; and he insinuated to Louis that a third person, whom he could not mention, was the origin of a dissension which had ended in a manner to reflect honour on his father. The Cardinal then hinted that Wharton had vanished on some occult mission, — to circumvent the Italian investiture, or to bring a noted English senator to the feet of his lady of Bavaria.

"And so," added the smiling ecclesiastic, "our political Adonis seeks to revenge the triumphant magnanimity of his transcendent rival."

From all this, though Louis could not learn much to criminate his friend, he gained enough to impress him with an increased conviction of his father's greatness of mind,— that a generosity, something like his own romantic nature, had impelled the few words of self-blame which had dropped from Ripperda in their first, and indeed only, conference on the subject. After that discussion, it was never resumed; and, the whole matter dying away from people's

tongues, the Spanish ambassador appeared in every circle, as usual; bright and serene as the cloudless sky of mid-summer.

The favour in which he was held at court was made more apparent; and, though the despatches which were to bring the royal assent to Louis's marriage seemed unaccountably delayed, yet, to show that no doubt remained in Elizabeth's mind of the father or son's sincerity, she permitted the solemn instalment of the latter, in the name of Don Carlos, into the reversion of the long-disputed Italian dukedoms.

This important rite was no sooner completed, than a courier extraordinary from Spain brought to Ripperda his recall to the council of his sovereign.

The various objects of the treaty with Vienna had so alarmed the other kingdoms of Europe, that the cabinet of Madrid was besieged, day and night, by the clamour of their respective envoys. Grimaldo, the prime minister, enfeebled by age, and adverse to the new system of politics, had begged to resign his office. Philip granted the petition, and now sent for Ripperda to take the supreme chair himself, and (in the King's own words) to consummate the greatness of Spain. Their Majesties desired that the Marquis de Montemar should be left *chargé des affaires*, and that the Duke himself would immediately set forth on his return.

Ripperda examined further into the royal packet, to find the expected consent for his son's marriage; but it was not there, and no notice taken of the application he had made for it. On questioning the messenger whether he had omitted to bring any part of his charge, the man told him that another special courier, which was Castanos, had been despatched a few days before him; and he was not less surprised than alarmed to find him not arrived, as he knew he brought despatches of great value.

The disappointment Elizabeth sustained, in this procrastination of the marriage of her favourite, was absorbed for a time in her regrets for the recall of her friend. Louis could think only of his father's glorious summons, to perfect the happiness of his country; and when, in the midst of

the Duke's preparation for departure, the lingering messenger did arrive, this affectionate son hardly cast a thought on his prolonged reprieve, — that Castanos brought no despatches!

Castanos told Ripperda he had been beset in the mountains of Carinthia by a band of armed men, who rifled and left him for dead. A poor herdsman found him, and took him to his hut; where, having recovered strength to pursue his journey, he came forward to apprise his master that he had lost the despatches, and, with them, a casket of jewels, from Don Carlos to the Archduchess. The bruises on Castanos's person bore witness to the truth of his assault; and the Empress and her favourite were obliged to resign themselves, to await a courier from Ripperda himself, when he should have arrived in Spain.

On the third day after the declaration of his recall, Ripperda took his official leave, and presented his son in his new office. At parting, the Emperor invested the Duke with the star of the *Golden Fleece*, in which order he was the only exception to an undeviating line of sovereign princes. The Empress presented him with her picture, set in brilliants; and, when the court broke up, she told him to follow her, to receive the farewell commands of her daughter.

Louis waited in the ante-room, while his father entered the apartment where the still invalid Princess sat on a sofa, supported by the Countess Altheim. Louis could not help seeing the lovely group, through the half-obscuring draperies of the open door. The Princess was pale and thin; and, though dressed superbly, seemed fitter for her chamber.

When Ripperda drew near, a faint colour tinged her cheek.

"The Duke approaches you, my love," said the Empress, "to bear your commands to Don Carlos, and to receive from your hands the portrait of his future bride.

"Where is it?" said the Princess, turning hurryingly to Otteline.

The Countess drew a beautiful miniature from its case (which lay on the sofa near her), and presented it to her

young charge. Maria-Theresa held it in her hand, and looked on it with a languid smile.

"It is very pretty, and very fair," said she. "Do not you think so, Duke?" added she, putting it into Ripperda's hand, who received it on his knee. "But tell the Spanish Prince I shall be much fairer before he looks on it."

And then she cast down her eyes, and sat perfectly still and silent.

"What means my love, by so strange a message?" enquired the Empress.

The Princess did not answer, but merely sighed, and looked round, uneasily. Elizabeth repeated the question, with enquiries, whether she wished to send the Prince any thing else, that she looked about so searchingly.

"O, no," replied the young creature, shaking her head, and rising from her chair; "I only wish to give this rosary to the Duke of Ripperda, for himself;—himself alone!" cried she; and clasping her fair hands, as she dropped it into his, she turned hastily round, with a glowing cheek, and flew out of the apartment.

As the moment of her last raising her eyes, she had caught a glimpse of Louis, as he stood in a distant corner of the other room; and regarding with a pitying eye the resigned victim, who, like himself, was to be offered up to the ambition of others.

In evident emotion, Elizabeth put her hand on the arm of Ripperda, and, withdrawing with him into her closet, —Otteline advanced to his son.

Louis's soul was full of sympathy for the interesting Maria-Theresa; the import of whose melancholy message to Don Carlos he well defined: and his compassion for such thraldom, extending to himself, made him a very unfit companion for his own future bride. He could have wept over the sweet and faded Theresa; while the blooming cheek and rosy smile of Otteline,—at such a season! —withered him as she approached: and he stood, sad and absorbed, after he had given her the ceremonious salute of the day.

The Countess had found her account in not striving to

change these fitful moods in her lover. But, while she suppressed the risings of her haughty soul, she often said within herself,—"Disdainful tyrant! My hour is coming! then you shall feel what you have done by trampling on the slave, who only waits a few magic words, to be your sovereign!"

For the whole of the remainder of the day, Ripperda's house was crowded with ministers, foreign ambassadors, and persons of various descriptions. It was past midnight before the last of these levies was dismissed; in the midst of all of which Louis had seen his father like a presiding deity. He seemed the umpire of Europe; as if the monarchs of each realm stood before him in the persons of their delegates, to hear from his lips the fiat of their weal or woe. To all, he was as gracious as he was peremptory: and, while he asserted the greatness of Spain, and proclaimed her demands on the various quarters of the globe, he breathed nothing but peace and prosperity to the nations that sought her amity.

Ripperda did not go to rest the whole night. He sat till morning, instructing his son on the objects intrusted to his completion. Louis received these lessons as distinctly as a mirror reflects the face that looks on it; but, where that fled, these were stationary, and remained indelibly stamped on his mind.

With the rising orb of day, the travelling equipage was announced. Ripperda rose from his seat. Louis started up also, with an emotion, to which he would not give voice.

"I have spoken of all that relates to your public duty," resumed the Duke; "I wish your private concerns were in as fair a prospect. But, in my last conference with the Empress, I found myself obliged to assure her, (and without any mental reservation!) that I would not suffer the Queen to put in any demurs, with regard to your marriage with the favourite. But cheer yourself under the sacrifice. Believe, that in giving Otteline your name, you perform an act of self-devotion,—of a consequence to the interests of your country;—I cannot now explain; but it is worthy the price. Like your father, my son, you must live to

virtue alone; live for mankind; live to future ages! Do this, and all common concerns will be lost in the imperishable glory!"

Louis threw himself on his father's bosom.

"For this once!" cried he, in the full voice of filial affection; "for this once, let me be pressed to the heart that inspires me to virtue! Oh, my father, may I be like unto thee!—and all minor enjoyments shall be nothing to me!"

The Duke strained him to his breast. Louis's cheek was wet with tears; but his own flowed; so, he knew not whether any of his father's mingled there. Ripperda strove, gently, to break from him. Louis clasped his hands, as he sunk on his knees; "Bless me, oh, my father!" cried he: "bless me, ere you leave me to this dangerous world!"

The Duke paused, and looked for a moment on the bent head of his son.

"Bless you, Louis!" said he. "But be firm in yourself, and you will need no beadsman's orison."

Louis hardly heard the latter sentence, in his growing emotions; and pressing the hem of his father's garment to his lips, it slid from his hand as the Duke drew it away, and disappeared through the door.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

LIBRARY EDITION.

POPULAR EDITION.

PRESCOTT'S WORKS.

LIBRARY EDITION.

THE CONQUEST OF PERU. Sixth and Revised Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. with Portraits, 32*s.*

"This work may take a foremost place among the histories of the present day, and will not shrink from a comparison with many in past ages."—*Spectator.*

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO. Sixth Edition. 2 vols. with Portraits, 32*s.*

"In this work are sketches of scenery worthy of Sir Walter Scott, battle-pieces rivalling those of Napier, with pictures of disasters scarcely less pathetic than those drawn by Thucydides."—*Edinburgh Review.*

THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA. Seventh Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. with Portraits, 36*s.*

"Written in a spirit and style worthy of Xenophon."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS. 8vo. Portrait. 14*s.*

POPULAR EDITION.

THE CONQUEST OF PERU. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 18*s.*

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 18*s.*

THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 18*s.*

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

BENTLEY'S SHILLING SERIES

FOR

THE RAIL, STEAMBOAT, OR HOME LIBRARY.

THE COMIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR. New Edition. With 50 Illustrations. 1*s.*

TURF CHARACTERS: THE OFFICIALS, AND THE SUB-ALTERNS. 1*s.*

THE ATTACHÉ; OR, SAM SLICK IN ENGLAND. 5*s.*

PADDIANA; OR, SCRAPS AND SKETCHES OF IRISH LIFE 3*s.* 6*d.*

NOTES ON NOSES. 1*s.*

SAM SLICK THE CLOCKMAKER. 5*s.* (530 pages.)

OLLA PODRIDA. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, Author of "Peter Simple." 3*s.* 6*d.*

SMITH'S TRADITIONS OF THE STREETS OF LONDON. 3*s.* 6*d.* (440 pages.)

MAXWELL'S WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST. 3*s.* 6*d.*

MONSIEUR VIOLET. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, Author of "Peter Simple," &c. 3*s.* 6*d.*

BOZ'S MEMOIRS OF GRIMALDI, THE CLOWN. 3*s.* 6*d.* With numerous Engravings, by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, and Portrait.

NORMAN'S BRIDGE. By the Author of "Emilia Wyndham." 3*s.* 6*d.*

MRS. TROLLOPE'S DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS. 3*s.* 6*d.* With Portrait.

CHAMBERS'S HISTORY OF SCOTLAND. 3*s.* 6*d.*

SLACK'S MINISTRY OF THE BEAUTIFUL. 3*s.* 6*d.*

NEALE'S LIFE-BOOK OF A LABOURER. 3*s.* 6*d.*

*** *To be had of all Booksellers, and at all the Railway Stations.*

Bradbury & Evans, Printers, Whitefriars.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
823 P83P1849 C001 v.1
Pastor's fire-side : a novel /
3 0112 088987844